HOMILIES

ON

CHRISTIAN WORK.

PREPARING FOR THE PRESS.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE LIFE

OF

PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D.D.

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HOMILIES

ON

CHRISTIAN WORK.

BY

CHARLES STANFORD, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF
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"JOSEPH ALLEINE," &c.

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INTRODUCTION.

"HOMILY" is often thought to be a word of solemn sound and very reverend meaning, sacred to the use of the Church of England. In reality it only means a discourse in the free, live, simple style of talk in company. In early days, when sermons were familiar exhortations, homilies mainly differed from them in being still more informal than they, and in being still more directly spoken to the people. "Sermones," said Augustine, "qui proferuntur in populum quos Græci ὁμιλίας vocant." We are told by a writer in the ninth century, that they were not delivered from the pulpits. Dr. Hammond says that on festivals "the subject of the homily was always the business of the day." Upon the whole, therefore, the word Homilies may be fairly taken as the title of the plain words here following.

Most of these words were spoken at meetings of the *London Baptist Association.* Keeping this in

mind, readers may be able to account for certain allusions that would otherwise be obscure; and it is hoped will also be induced to excuse one or two instances in which the homilist, speaking in different places, has called attention to the same "present-day" truths, not dreaming that his addresses would ever be put together into a book, possibly to be read and compared. It is so unusual for a minister to publish any of the speeches delivered by him in the ordinary course of his ministry, that it seems further needful, almost in self-defence, to say that these have been recovered from various printed reports, revised and here given, only at the urgent request of friends.

CHARLES STANFORD.

October, 1879.

I.

THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH.

SAID Archbishop Leighton, "If other brethren speak for the times, let one poor wight speak for Eternity." I am reminded of this apology now, for, conscious that papers read at denominational meetings are expected to deal with denominational matters, or with cases of conscience and questions of reform arising out of the times, I am also more than conscious that other brethren can treat these subjects more wisely than I can; and must therefore beg to take for the present paper a subject more simply spiritual. My title is "The World in the Church." Out of this, three questions arise.

First, *Is the world in the Church?* By the world, I now mean the spirit of the world; that is, the spirit of those who are at home in this world, and have no other home. By the Church, I mean the sublime society of souls saved by Christ from this spirit and all its awful penalties, and who are under the law of a life born from above. Taking the two terms as thus defined, of course the world can only be in the Church as a foreign element, which in the degree of its existence must be destructive. *Is it* in the Church? Is there always an unquestionable difference between our spirit and the spirit of those who in their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, their fashions of opinion, standards of value, estimates of profit and loss, and in all

* Delivered at Arthur Street, Walworth, June 27th, 1871.

the laws and stimuli of their souls, are shut up within the limitations of the present life? Do Christians never consult the oracles of this world as to the way of making a profession of religion, and do they never shrink from certain forms of profession or observance only because such forms may imply the probable absence of honoured social rank? In marriage, in commercial partnerships, in the change of a house, in the choice of a school for a child, is their judgment—the needle of the mind's compass—never disturbed by the magnetism of the world? Do they never betray undue preference for the paying virtues? do they never worship success? and do they never follow a mere majority? Are they never, after "the way of the world," proud of a man only because he is high up in the world? and when he has suffered adversity, do they never shun him only because he is down? When he has become poor, are they never loud in their censure of those faults of his, which while he was rich they were silent about? We have heard such charges made before now, and although they are, for the most part, but venomous falsehoods, they sometimes have in them a sufficient sting of truth to make us own, with sorrowful alarm, that the world is in the Church. It is usual to reverse the order of these words, and to speak of the Church in the world, as the ark was in the flood. Our dangers, however, are not so much from without as from within. Only the waters in the ship can sink the ship, but while kept outside, all the heaving deep of waters thundering over three-fifths of the globe can work no fatal shipwreck. So, while kept outside the Church, the floods of ungodly influence can only help to float it on its voyage of glory, or lift it to its Ararat of rest.

The next question is, *Why have we failed to cast the world out of the Church?* The causes of failure are not far

to seek. We have failed through trying to cast it out by wrong methods. Some examples of these methods may help us to a right conclusion.

For example, *a censorious spirit* will never cast out the evil we deprecate. Some members of Christ's holy Church, who are most sincere in their desire to be most marked from the world, and are most sensitive in conscience when they judge themselves, are often most restless with a fine sense of sin in others. They are infected with a fault-finding mania, which they think has in it the essence of sainthood. Setting up some standard of their own against worldliness—a standard that is, perhaps, simply prohibitive—they are apt to moralize with melancholy delight on the follies of those who come short of it. Keenly detective and severely judicial, they see and sentence motives as well as manifestations. We enter our appeal against many of their judgments. There is, we fancy, more of the virus of worldliness in some of their denunciations than in some of the things they denounce. When the brethren themselves become accusers of the brethren, we know whose patent they steal, and see in their practice an officious and unwarrantable interference within the province of Another.

The mere adherence to old fashions will not cast out worldliness. Distinct from the habit of disparagement that we have spoken of, yet in connection with it, we sometimes find a kind of conservatism. We still meet with good men and true, who chiefly maintain their protest against the world by resistance to innovations. They are for ever talking about the old paths, while "they forget that paths were made that men might walk in them, and not stand still, and try in vain to stop the way."* With them, a new fashion is worldliness. In all attractive modal changes they suspect "the pride of life." Instead of falling in with

* Kingsley's "Alexandria and her Schools," p. 34.

the forms, which are, in fact, the formations of the age, and the living developments of its shaping spirit, it is part of their very religion to take all their patterns from the dead past. "Just as if," says John Selden, "a man would have a kettle, and he would not go to our brazier to have it made as they make kettles now, but he would have it made as Hiram made his brass-work, who wrought in Solomon's Temple." After all, these are persons of *fashion*. That man is a slave to fashion, who is bound to mere fashion, whether of time past or time present; there may be as much worldliness in the one slavery as in the other, for worldliness is a spirit, fashion is but a form.

The mere use of a certain style of language will not cast out the world. Some of our brothers in the faith think that we must show that we are not of the world by a certain style of language that is not of the world. "The Pilgrims, passing through Vanity Fair, had a different speech from that spoken by the men of the Fair, so that they seemed barbarians each to the other." There is a difference of opinion as to what rightly constitutes that difference of speech. The use of phrases that have a kind of spiritual lusciousness, the free and random use of the Great Name in the common talk of life, the use of language answering in style to that of the salutations, exhortations, and benedictions of apostles, the use of antique and Eastern forms, which on their lips were fresh forms of living speech, but which on ours are only artificial imitations—that is not the difference we should aim at. "Most of the Oriental races still use these forms as habitually as did St. Paul himself, and are in nothing the better for it—often the worse. Let me read you a modern letter of this kind, omitting only a single sentence. It is addressed from one Arab prince to another, and runs thus:—'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, we 'Obeyd-ebn-

Rasheed, salute you, O'Abd-Allah, son of Feysulebn-Sa'ood: Peace be upon you, and the mercy of God and His blessings. . . . Now may God forbid that we should hear of any evil having begotten you. We salute also you, Father Feysul and your brothers, and all your family, and anxiously await your news in answer. Peace be with you.' That is surely a very pious and unworldly letter. Yet it was written by a prince whose innumerable treacheries and murders had earned him the surname of 'the Wolf'; and the omitted sentence charged two innocent travellers, an Englishman and a Syrian, with a crime punishable with death in the country for which they were just starting. With a courtly smile, and as a recommendation to favour, he gave them this pious, treacherous letter, in which death and murder lurked under devout forms, and which would certainly have cost them their lives, had they delivered it."* The use in our daily intercourse of Scripture phraseology, and of what has been called "the dialect of prayer," is not enough to show our separateness from the world. Our words ought to have the ring of reality, and our testimony for Christ, to have any force in it, ought to be given in the living language of to-day.

Retirement from the world will not cast out the world from the Church. In all ages Christ has had servants who have regarded the world as an evil too great to be fought with, and one from which safety can only be found in flight. In early days certain holy men sought that safety in caves of the forest, or under shadow of the convent wall. There, spending their days in study, in manual toil, or in visits to the sick, their nights on the chapel floor in prayer, they tried to maintain a life "unspotted from the world." It is not for such Christians as we are to speak of such as they

* Cox on "The Private Letters of St. John and St. Paul," p. 31. The letter he quotes is from Palgrave's Central Arabia, vol. i., p. 209.

were in tones of contemptuous pity. They were in error, but they were in earnest. If they were not "the salt of the earth" in the full sense of the Master's words, they were almost the only "salt" the earth had in their own times. Real worshippers of the real God, and acting up to their light, perhaps they inherited the promise—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." Read Columbkill's "Farewell to Arran," when summoned from the hermitage of the rock there to become Bishop of Iona. In this document he speaks of "the dear cell," and of the many holy, happy hours he had spent there, with "the wind whistling through the loose stones, and the sea spray hanging in his hair;" then says, "Farewell, Arran of my heart! Paradise is with thee, the garden of God is within the sound of thy bells."* We are in no danger of falling into this good man's form of error. We meet with but few Christian fakeers now. Not unfrequently do we find that "retirement from the world," as the expression is used by modern men, means retirement from its inconvenience, leaving what is irksome and offensive in a Christian's duty in the world, showing the white feather to the enemy, and leaving on others the onus of Church responsibility. It means, in a certain refined sense, only the enjoyment of the world without worry or disturbance. It means, says a keen observer, "a garden, quietness, out-door amusement, so runs the brief programme." And although every true disciple of Christ, when he speaks of "retirement from the world," includes in his meaning, aspirations far higher than these, and longs for the "calm retreat, the silent shade," that he may have more time for the Bible, and more freedom for a tranquil walk with God, it is not safe to leave the sphere of social action, till God gives the clear word of command; and when we have left it, we shall not be

* Froude's "Short Studies," ii. 217.

able so effectually as while we were in it, and looking life in the face, to help in casting the world out of the Church.

The third question is, *How we may hope to succeed in casting the world out of the Church.* Depend upon it, there is no cure for worldliness but the love of Christ. Apart from this, no set of rules, no formal plan of life, can do more than touch surfaces. Some of us hardly know yet, as we ought to know, what the love of Christ is, and what wonderful things it can do. We sometimes seem to think that the Christian sense of the very word love is a non-natural sense, and that love to Christ is unlike any other kind of love. Love, having the mastery of a passionate personal devotion; love, with pangs of tenderness, thrills of joy; the very romance of love, mortal may feel for mortal, and we can understand it; but Jesus is with many of us rather the object of faith as a Saviour, than of love as a Friend; and yet, after all, religion is only a friendship, a real love for a real Person. "What," asks Professor Newman in the course of an argument about another question, "is the following from Dr. Watts but a wonderful love-song?"

My God, the spring of all my joys,
  The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
  And comfort of my nights.

In darkest shades if He appear,
  My dawning is begun;
He is my soul's sweet Morning Star,
  And He my Rising Sun.

These words may seem to make too free with "the High and Lofty One;" and men of taste may tell us that they nauseate their sentimentalism. Yet if such thoughts should

not often be spoken thoughts, it must be a grand thing to feel that they are the master thoughts of our lives. Our danger, if we boast of our refinement, and are proud of our proprieties, is not on the side of too much freedom in our friendship with Christ. The real fear is lest "we hurt His kind heart"—if we may borrow Bunyan's expression—by not feeling more at home with Him, by keeping our distance, and by only responding in the measured language of a timid and careful formality, when He calls us His friends, and asks us to give Him our confidence; and, though our spirits sink in awe before Him, and we sometimes wonder how we dare to love, it would be a strange inference that He is the less to be loved because He is of all beings most worthy. Let us but feel that Jesus Christ is real to us; let us feel that He is close to us, "closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands and feet;" let us feel that He really loves us—so loves us that He gave Himself away to save us by the great atoning sacrifice, and the fact that our own supreme Friend is the one Person who has in Himself the sum of all glories and perfections will not make us love Him the less. Feeling His love "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given to us," we shall find that love is the soul of power, and to use the old phase, we shall at last know how to cast out the world by "the expulsive power of a new affection."

Test, for instance, the power of this love to cast out worldliness from *our business*. That religion which is too weak for the wear and tear of life in the factory or the counting-house; that religion which is too delicate to live in the atmosphere of six days' work, and is a celestial plant that only flowers on Sunday; that which shrinks from the soiling touch of merchandise, and which has nothing to do with weights and measures; that which allows a man to spend the glorious wealth of his soul as mere capital

for business, and to use his word of promise as a mere tool of trade, to be kept or not kept as it serves the purposes of commercial facility or convenience; that which allows him to contribute to the cause of God money that he is all the while owing to man; that which allows him to palm off one thing for another; that which allows him to take the standing which belongs to the possession of solid property, when he has only fictitious or conventional representatives of value, which allow him to do what conscience condemns, on the plea "that it is always done"—*that*, we know, is simply impossible to the man who walks in conscious fellowship with Christ. The thing is inconceivable. Let the soul of any man be suffused with a sense of a loving, pitying, hallowing, Infinite Presence; let him remember that wherever he toils, the Lord looks on, and that though he may toil all night and take nothing, he has a Friend who will at the right moment tell him on which side of the ship to cast his net; let him, like one whose toils are now ended, learn to say in each agonizing strait of life, "Now, where is Jesus of Nazareth, my most dear and intimate Friend?" let him always take that Friend into consultation, do nothing without His advice, and dread, above all things, to grieve His Holy Spirit, and sin away His presence; then, though he may take a wrong step, he will not take a wrong course, and his spirit will not be the spirit of the world.

The love of Christ will be just as sure and fine as a living law *to regulate our recreations, and all our intercourse with society.* "Recreation is a holy necessity of man's nature." "There is a time to laugh." The Christian life is not to shun every glad assembly, every festive scene, and crape itself in austere solemnity. But how far may we do as others do, and where must we draw the line between the right and the wrong in amusements? Is it indeed more

worldly to play with bits of coloured card than with bits of carved ivory? Is it consistent to take the children to a certain kind of entertainment at one place, but inconsistent to take them to the same kind of entertainment at another place? Is one fashion of dress the probable sign of regeneracy, and another of unregeneracy? Legislation on such subjects is not so simple a thing as it seems to be. We have no right to be narrow other than as the narrow way is narrow; we have no right to make laws that are only arbitrary, and have no root in spiritual instinct; we have no more right to make new duties than to make new doctrines. It is a delicate thing for any Christian to decide for another man what is lawful or not, in some questions that are asked about amusements, for what might be injurious to one might not be to another. Let me, however, enjoy the friendship of Christ, and be conscious that His love fills my heart, and His presence my day, then every such question is to me, as an individual, wonderfully simplified. I can understand now the old pastor's advice, "Love Christ with all your soul, and then love the world as much as you please." I shall join in no company that will compel me to part company with Him. I shall soon find out what is the spiritual atmosphere of a place, and whether I inhale the deadly chloroform of worldliness that sends the life of grace to sleep, or breathe the fresh air of spirituality. If in any scene of enjoyment the thought of Christ falls like a cold shadow on my happiness, if I feel engaged in something which I cannot thank Him for or ask His blessing on, if I find that it tends to make the Bible a dead book and prayer a dull ceremony, I know that, however good such a recreation may be for others, it is not good for me, and thus I carry in my heart the power that casts out worldliness.

In like manner the love of Christ will keep in due place

all the *various mental pursuits* that seem to belong only to this world. We have met before to-day with Christians who are troubled in conscience on account of the interest they feel in literature, science, or art. Sometimes, when engaged in their favourite pursuits, they are shot through with sudden panic at the thought of eternity, of lost souls, and of the vast amount of work yet to be done for the cause of salvation. Yet it is in the very nature of friendship to be pleased with what pleases my Friend; and in whatever department my studies take me, I find that He has been there before me. Poet, Musician, Artist, Chemist, Hydraulist, Mechanist, Astronomer,—what shall I call Him? He may be called by any one of these names, as truly as by the titles of Prophet, Priest, and King. I hear "His voice walking amidst the trees of the garden." I find Him in "the deep that coucheth beneath." The bright creations of literature sprang from genius that He inspired. I read his thoughts in everything that grows; I watch Him at work in all nature, and at work with infinite patience, accuracy, and care, betokening infinite delight. I know that "this is a world where souls are lost and saved, and that beyond time there is eternity." But does He not know the same? and yet, having at a cost past my knowledge provided the means by which sinners may obtain the "one thing needful," does He not spare time and thought on the infinite millions of small things that interest the student of nature and art? Is it worldly for me, in my humble measure, "to walk by the same rule and to mind the same things"? Knowing that the great work is a finished work, and the great burden a burden rolled away, who can be so much at liberty as Christ's friend to see the glory and enjoy the charm of all Christ's work in this world? It is part of the very friendship itself to be ready for this, when the appreciating faculty has been imparted; but, at the same time, that friendship

will help me to adjust the claims of this life and the next; for, as far as I experience it, I shall, in the measure of interest I take in each, copy Christ, thinking as He thinks, and caring as He cares. The earthly will be subordinate to the heavenly, and in this sphere, as in all others, the spirit of this world will be cast out.

No one must suppose that in thus urging the need of increased friendship with Jesus, we would encourage the increase of that mere religious introspectiveness which will make us delight to meditate on our own experiences, to count the pulses of our souls, and think about ourselves. Morbid self-consciousness is the bane of grace, and the love of Christ is the antidote to this bane. If we think of our Friend more and more, we shall think about ourselves less and less, until we reach the elevation of spirituality which made the Apostle say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me." If we have less of such self-forgetfulness than formerly; if in any degree we have "forgotten our resting-place," lost our first love, and have begun to treat our Friend like a stranger; if our confidential hours with Him are not so common as they were; if, when we are with Him, we now feel shy, straitened, and in a hurry; if we have allowed ourselves to be ensnared by the cant of the day, which is for ever saying, "Give us more religion and less theology," and so, through slighting the study of those Biblical doctrines which alone reveal Him as the Saviour, are allowing that knowledge of Him on which our friendship is founded to fade into indistinctness or slip into confusion, "O come and let us return unto the Lord!" let us now renew "our solemn league and covenant" with Him, that from this time our fellowship may grow, causing all men to read more distinctly in our lives the truth of His declaration to His disciples—"Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

II.

LONDON GONE TO LIVE IN THE COUNTRY.

CROYDON, APRIL, 1873.

I WAS told that going down to Croydon would be going into the country, and would make a charming change for me. But this is not what I call the country. Going down into the country is going down the line until you come to a sleepy intermediate station,—then stepping out of the carriage,—also out of the nineteenth century,—getting up behind a sleepy horse, and going on for miles without meeting even a cow,—meandering on between banks of sprouting fern and blossoming rustic tangle,—now under arches of leaves, now in the open of glorious dreamland,—the song above and the hushing rustle below only seeming to deepen

> "Silence that like a poultice falls
> To heal the blows of sound."

So on, on, until you come upon a village that lies in a grassy dip like a lark's nest in clover; then alighting to walk through a sleepy village green, at whose borders white gables striped with dark woodwork glimmer between trees; on, past the old man sitting asleep in the sun; but whose eyes, as you pass, open and roll with "a slow bovine gaze;" on, past the pound, and the old grey ass standing inside it asleep, with a tuft of half-munched thistles in his mouth; and on, till in serene hush you

come to the old church,—its wooden spire all on one side, its rusty weathercock true to the north, whatever winds may blow, and its tumbling tombstones powdered with orange and silver. Croydon does not come up to this ideal.

"Advowson of Rectory for sale. Charming country; gardens and greenhouses; coachhouse and stables; comfortable parsonage and well-kept grounds; grammar school for sons; good society; pipes for hot water; income £800 a year; present incumbent seventy-five years of age; heart complaint; population small; light duty, and no Dissenters. I am sure that your minister was not drawn to you by any representations like these.

In these days of prose, when men are about to tunnel Olympus, when there is talk of a tram in the road down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and when you catch the first sight of the Pyramids from a first-class carriage window, we hunger and thirst "for the country!" Where is it? It is not here.

London is a vanishing quantity. Leaving the old houses to be used for the purposes of trade; building new ones for the purposes of life, its population is always radiating to the circumference. In consequence of this, we old ministers who stand at our posts like Roman sentinels, are month by month parting with dear old friends,—supporters of our institutions, teachers in our schools, counsellors who have often helped us by the light and stimulus of educated opinion, persons who have been the flower of our congregation; and when our hands hang down, who shall hold them up now Aaron and Hur are both gone to live in the country?

Of course we ought not to complain. London life is such a life of tense nerve and toiling thought, that naturally all who can, try to find for a home a lodge in some green

wilderness, and for daily breath the spirit of the spring. Naturally, however, I have felt curious to see this much-talked-of country. Now I do see what you mean, I say "Yes,—no,—exactly; but if you really wish to see the grass, and hear the cuckoo, you should come back to Camberwell." Health to Croydon! No doubt it is a region of enchantment; at the same time, where we are now, the only forests in sight are forests of humanity; the only landscapes, long lines of architectural perspective; the only fields are fields for the gospel plough. Dr. Chalmers, standing on George the Fourth's bridge at Edinburgh, and looking down on the countless houses, turned to his companion and said, his face all aflash with enthusiasm, "A beautiful field sir, a very beautiful field!" So say I of the prospect here.

When the last comet glowed into sight, and the sages talked about the possible inconvenience of a collision between it and our earth, a certain Leicestershire farmer declared that he should never be able to put up with all that fuss, so to get clean out of it, he should go to Australia. My old friends who have emigrated to suburban settlements, you have not done so on that principle. You only sighed for change! As Philip Henry said of heaven, we may say of Croydon, in coming to it you change your place, but not your company. Instead of less to do, you have more to do. We fondly hope that your long travellings twice a day, your greater work, and your new responsibilities, will not prove to be too much for you. Anyhow, this is certain: London has come to Croydon after you, and with London, the "London Association."

It is one of the objects of this Association to help the erection of chapels in the vast and ever-enlarging ring of our suburban metropolis. Give me leave to say a word about this. A famous man of letters once took the lease

of a house on the top of a hill, in a circle of beautiful sceneries, but quite forgot to enquire until he had taken it, if it had a well handy; then he found that there was no well, and no natural probability of making one. In former days, when old members of London churches pitched their tents in new ground like this, they occasionally forgot to enquire about the spiritual well until afterwards. They then often found that no place of worship in which they could feel at home was within reach, and that there was great difficulty in rearing one. You Croydonian recluses have nobly conquered your difficulty, and done your part in this respect. Grace be with you; peace be within these walls, and prosperity within this palace of worship! But we are "members one of another;" many of our other neighbours are here to-day; we therefore want to help them to do the like, and to suggest Christian hints how to do it.

There is a peaceful town in Hampshire, famous for its ancient minster, about which hovers a beautiful Gothic story. It is said that its present site is not the original one selected. The workmen were forced to leave that, for they found that the stones they had built up in the day were every night carried away and built up by some hand of mystery on the spot where the church now stands. This spot was therefore fixed upon. Then they always saw working with them a supernumerary—one who was a Secret, and whose name none durst ask. He was never with them in their times of rest; never at the pay-table; but he wrought wondrously, and without him they could do nothing. One day, when the fabric was nearly finished, a large beam was hoisted to be fixed on the roof, but it was found to be too short. At night they went home puzzled, and saw no way out of the difficulty. Next morning they saw that very beam in its place, and not

only so, but found that it was a foot longer than was needful. The mysterious workman soon appeared again, and now they knew what had made their hearts burn within them when in His company, and why they had then felt so afraid to sin. The awful Carpenter of Nazareth had been at work on the building, and so it came to pass that the minster was called Christ Church. This is no vulgar superstition, but a parable, rousing, tender, and glorious, which one of God's "hidden ones," some great Anonymous of the Middle Ages, set going as a way of raising men's thoughts to Christ, and teaching them a great truth about Him.

Let us make use of that truth, for it will apply to building a Nonconformist meeting-house as well as the grandest and holiest poem in stone. Look to the Supernumerary Workman: He is no absentee, doing His work by deputy; for He has said, "Lo, I am with you alway." By prayer get Him to help you in choosing a site. You may have difficulties great as the old builders had, though not of the same kind. Sometimes your fellow-disciples make the difficulty. The feeblest saint can hinder the work, for nothing is easier than to persuade people *not* to give, *not* to do, *not* to say a thing that will impose a duty or demand a sacrifice; nothing is more likely to succeed than an appeal to natural *inertia;* no one is more likely to be respected as an oracle about a gospel building enterprise, than a man who says "I don't see the necessity." Sometimes the difficulty is caused by some one who talks in the dark, and who, like the man in the Pilgrim's Progress, hides behind the wall, and pours cold water on your fire. Sometimes a difficulty that impedes you at the first suggestion of a plan, lasts but a very little time, for it comes from the opposition of those who only oppose it because they think it will not

go; when they find it does go, they help it. Sometimes the difficulty is caused by some beam being too short; but Christ can make it long enough. Whatever your difficulties are, look to Jesus, and let Him "work within you to will and to do." He will help you to plan, to give, to think, and to manipulate. To Him be all the glory!

Sturdy Nonconformists though you are, I have further to ask you to help not only in building chapels, but *churches.* "Let everything be done," says Paul, "with a view to building."* He is constantly urging Christians to build. Much emphasis is placed on the word, and some form of it occurs in this figurative sense thirty-eight times in the Greek Testament, though only twenty-one times in the English New Testament, because it is there variously translated. What can the word mean? It certainly has no reference to the erection of chapels—his reference is to *churches;* but only to churches built of stones that are alive, stones that think, stones that love, stones that pray. To many persons the meaning of the word is under a cloud, because it is translated into the word edification, its equivalent in ecclesiastical Latin; so on some lips it simply means individual instruction or confirmation. A person will tell you that he was edified by this or that sermon, this or that book. If you think, you will see that "edification" is related to the word "edifice," and if you try however earnestly, you will find it impossible to edify a stone. A Christian is not an edifice, but only a stone in one. It is plain as daylight that the word edification is only a social word; it only applies to Christians in the aggregate; it has regard to the mutual improvement of Christian churches, and to kind co-partnery

* 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

of service between Christian and Christian. There is edification when each stone is smoothed and squared and fitted in,—when there is a place for every one, and every one is in his place. There *is* a place for every one; a place for one who is glorious, for another who is strong; a place for the small as well as for the great; a place for the oddity; and, as a wise master-builder has remarked, "even a crooked rail may turn a corner." Not the most obscure Christian can be spared. Now, when a church is full of the life that pours out from the living stone, making all the stones lively, so that they "grow unto a holy temple in the Lord," then true edification will go on, and every unit in the church will find its appropriate place and function. Has each believer here found his own task, and is he doing his own work? Is every one a deacon, who ought to be; or a visitor, who ought to be; or an evangelist, who ought to be; or a son of consolation to the sorrowful, who ought to be; a teacher of children, who ought to be? and is every one "edified" into his own proper place? Are you all living the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans? This is what is meant by edification, and thus are you asked to help in building churches.

Allow me now to point to an end that we have in view in all this building; it is best expressed in a phrase that we find in the book of Acts. "Believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both men and women." "Added to the Lord." I delight in that exquisite definition. "Added to the *church*, you mean," some one whispers. No; "added to the Lord," added as a dead stone brought from "the hole of the pit" is added to the living stone, and so by the contact made alive; added as the graft is added to the tree, and then lives by the sap, which is the soul of the tree; therefore we pray that God may use us, and bless the apparatus of which we

have been talking, that multitudes now afar off may be added to the Lord. Our object is not that they should join the church, but that they should join Christ. When they have joined Him, if they continue in our company, they will probably become connected with our denomination, and why not? We own to no spiritual provincialism, in us there is nothing circumscriptive, and we see no reason why ours or any other honest denominationalism should hinder Christian unity with all other persons, however denominated, who have also joined the Lord. It seems indeed likely rather to help that unity than to hinder it, when disciples join the society of other disciples, who accord with them in those *marginalia*, controversies about which have used up so much time, and chilled so much love between souls who are one in Christ, though not one in everything else. Astronomers form the stars into constellations; botanists, the flowers into classes, which for convenience' sake they denominate accordingly; yet there is but one cosmos. I see denominationalism in all that is of God, yet with it I see eternal unity. I see denominationalism in the sky, yet unity; denominationalism in all the kingdoms of nature, yet unity; denominationalism in heaven, yet unity; for there are thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, cherubim and seraphim, and spirits of just men made perfect, having for the centre of their life the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne. I want to see more denominationalism like that on earth.

III.

*CHRIST'S WITNESSES.**

THE Association ought not now, at any rate, to be like that gentle, nervous man of whom Robert Hall said that he seemed to beg pardon of all flesh for being alive. At the same time, we ought to show to all whom it may concern, that we *are* alive, and are having an object and doing a work worth living for. Unless we can do this, we really have no apology to make for our existence. The gospel of the grace of God that we profess, pours beautiful disdain on all unreality; it will have nothing to do with mere nominalism; its kingdom is not in word, but in power. When a man calls himself a minister, it asks him to make full proof of his ministry by doing a minister's work. For proof that a tree is good, it asks not for paper credentials or platform speeches about it, but for good fruit; by which term I understand not merely actions, but those actions which are the natural formation and outgrowth of life. There is no good in an association of mere dead Baptists,—in an association of respectable men, however they have been christened, who are all fast asleep,—in an association of spiritual cripples, consumptives, and asthmatics, trying, in their own strength, to turn that world which is wrong side up, upside down,—in an association

* Delivered at Stockwell, April 8th, 1874.

of litigious talkers, crooked, crotchety, obstructive sticks—there is no good whatever in such an association, for such sticks are not worth making up into a faggot. If we are no better than this, we are not joined together by God, neither is our Association lawful. But, thank God, this is not a fair description of us. We are an association of *Witnesses for Christ*. When our Lord Jesus was at the point of ascension to His throne, He said to the disciples who were then upon the earth, "Ye shall receive power, after ye have received the Holy Ghost, to be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth." In obedience to this charge, we join this Association to make our own special witness for Christ more effective in this our Jerusalem. We desire to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as to our own personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. We wish to speak it out in all the languages we know—the language of deeds as well as of words, and in ways that cost us time and trouble, sacrifice and money. This is our object, and the question is, are we carrying this object out? The answer to this question is partly given in Mr. Spurgeon's clear and telling pamphlet on the work that has been done. The facts he states there are not only encouraging to us, but encouraging as to their bearings on the interests of spiritual nonconformity in general. A few weeks ago, when that fine father, Thomas Binney, entered into his rest, there appeared in one of the leading papers a most respectful notice of him, in which it was also intimated that Dissenters of the class to which we belong had now no leader left, and that we have not had any great leader since Watts and Doddridge died, those days having been "the palmy days of nonconformity." The fact is, that when Doddridge was about thirty years old, he said that, to the best of his knowledge, all the

Dissenters in London—Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists—had only built one meeting-house since he was born, and that one, we know, was the one in Bury Street, built for the other great leader, Dr. Watts, by the lively and united energies of Sir John Hartopp, Sir Thomas Abney, and others, at a cost of £649 and a few halfpence over. What was the average meeting-house like? Why, though intensely respectable, it was a chill and dismal place, especially in average English weather; "enough to make even a toad catch his death of cold," once wrote a lively young person, who, if living now, would be about a hundred and fifty years of age. But what kind of spiritual witness was it that was usually made in these circumstances? We are forced to confess that it was not a very exalted or fervent one. What is called "the palmy time of non-conformity" was one of the most dreary winters that ever benumbed the faculties of Christian men. The very thermometer was frozen. When I draw back the curtain of the past, that I may get a clearer glimpse of such fathers as Watts and Doddridge, my hand trembles with reverence and delight; but the more I see of them, the more am I compelled to admit that, although they were great leaders, they had in their own day comparatively few followers, and it would be folly to say "the former times were better than these."

I know that chapel-building is not in itself a sign of spiritual prosperity; and that masonry, however magically hung, however charmed into leaf and flower and fretwork, however lighted up with a shower of beauty from "storied windows richly dight," is not in itself a thing to make "joy in the presence of the angels of God;" yet I am glad to see houses of worship now rising, that look as if love had delighted to build them; and in contrast with the fact of the one chapel built in all London through the course of

Christ is *more time for you and Christ to be confidentially together*. If "hearsay" is not evidence, and if evidence about a person is information about that person given from the personal knowledge of the witness; then if we would be better witnesses for Christ than we are, we must have more personal knowledge of Him; and how shall we get it? Only by having more time with Him; you must have time when He and you can be apart from the crowd. You two. Time not merely for prayer, but for thought. More time for meditation, more time for real fellowship; time that costs money; time taken out of work; time taken even out of public work for Christ. You who are the most leading public workers know full well that the hardest and most obstructive path to all true life is that which leads through the little businesses of religion, and that if you do not frequently give up even holy work for quickening worship, work will degenerate into a barren externalism, and witness-bearing will be worth next to nothing. Every day Jesus asks for your most sacred confidences, and sometimes He seems to say, as He did to the first disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." A most happy thing it is for any one of you City men, when you can so contrive as to take train, to stop at some distance from the City, then to get into some place for an hour that is "desert," but desert only in the sense of being deserted—a desert of deep green grass, a desert where you can look this way into valleys of colour, and that way over sheets of furze like the field of living cloth of gold,—a desert where the hart bounds along as it "pants after the water-brooks," where you can "consider the lilies," or where, between the stems of the trees, you can see the flashes of the river; where you feel as if you had been brought out of the dust and fire of toil into one of God's "wealthy places;" there, like one of the patriarchs, to rest or walk with Him. But

when a holiday like this is out of the question; loft, or cellar, or "chamber over the gate"—any "desert place" will do, if in it you can cultivate intimacy with "Him who is invisible;" but depend upon it, if we wish to be "faithful witnesses," we must somehow contrive to be more alone with God. Let each do thus, and we shall be filled with "power from on high," so making our very lives evidence, though our lips are still; proving by a real salvation the life of a real Saviour. An association with such a constituency—an association, all whose members are Christ's witnesses wherever they are, and who only associate to make their witnessing more effective, must be a mighty reality. "Give me," said John Wesley, "one hundred men who hate nothing but sin, fear nothing but God, and are determined 'to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified,' and I will turn the world upside down."

IV.

*PRAYER FOR SIGNS AND WONDERS.**

I HAVE been invited to speak to you on the subject of "Prayer for Signs and Wonders." Some of you, no doubt, in seeing this subject announced, thought at once of a certain fact in old church story. Everybody knows that many of us have High Church proclivities, and are quite ready to endorse and illuminate the motto of our friends the Ritualists—"To reform is to revive." The simple difference between us and them is that their standard is not high enough for us. If we may appropriate the phrase of Chalmers—to our minds, mediævalism has the fault of "rawness and recency." Our souls sigh for something grander than Gothic fancy-work, something clearer than "dim religious light," and something older than the Fathers. We stand by the old church as it was "in the perfection of that little moment" when its glory was almost like the clear glory of a river bursting from its rock, as yet without a ripple from the tempest, or a stain from foul infusions. In accordance with such an ideal, allow me to strike the key-note of our thought on a sentence that you will find in what we might almost venture to call the very first page in the very first chapter of the very first book of ecclesiastical history: "Grant . . . . that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus" (Acts iv. 29, 30).

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* Delivered at Bloomsbury Chapel, October 22nd, 1876.

I. Keeping in mind all through that this prayer was gloriously owned, first let me beg you to note *what the signs and wonders were that the people prayed for.* Whatever may be the meaning of these two terms elsewhere, I think that here they set forth not two things, but two aspects of one thing, and that the wonders wanted were themselves the signs wanted. Wonders were wanted that should be arrestive and unquestionable signs, proving that Jesus was the Christ, and that although the world had seen Him die, He was still alive. In such a case, on the principle that extraordinary evidence is needful to establish extraordinary fact, only wonders *could* be signs—nothing less could serve the purpose.

"*Is* the Crucified One now alive? then let Him do something wonderful enough to prove it. Is He the Son of God? then let Him do something that only the Son of God could do." I suppose the primary reference was to wonders of the class denoted in the connectional phrase, "By stretching out Thine hand to heal." We can instantly see what value such wonders would have as signs. A man, for instance, looking white as a sheet, would burst breathless into his house, and say, "I have just come from a place in which there is the real presence of Him who died upon the cross, and where He is working wonders through the son of old Jonah the fisherman. Simon—you know Simon?—prayed in the name of Jesus over a blind man, and in a moment I saw the dull white eye clear iself, and the soul flash out! He prayed over a paralytic, and I saw the stone-fixed face *lighten!* He prayed over a dead body, and as plainly as I see you now, I saw its eyes flutter, and open, and stare! I saw these things, I tell you. Wife and children, these are no laughing matters. Jesus *is* alive, as they say. I have been mad to hate Him so. I am pricked to the heart. What must I do?"

Without stopping just now to discuss the question whether

wonders of this very nature are still possible, I say that we certainly have within our compass wonders that are still greater, and which are therefore still greater signs; for Christ's words are still in force, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." Making a saint out of a sinner is a greater work than any work on eyes and ears, hands and feet. Regeneration is the imperial flower of all the miracles, the fulfilment of them all, expressing the meaning of them all. An evangelist, who lived about two hundred years after the apostles, spoke about what could be done in the name of Jesus, in language which may be roughly rendered thus: "Give me a man passionate, slanderous, ungovernable; I will make him one of God's lambs. Give me a man greedy, grasping, and close; I will give him back to you munificent. Give me a man who shrinks from pain and death, and he shall presently despise the gibbet, the lance, and the lion. Give me a man who is impure, intemperate, and a rake, and you shall see him sober, chaste, and abstemious. Give me a man who is cruel and bloodthirsty, and that fury shall be converted into gentleness itself. Give me a man addicted to injustice, to folly, and to crime, and he shall without delay become just, prudent, and harmless." Such wonders, besides their own intrinsic blessedness, are signs proving that Jesus Christ is still alive in the world, "travelling in the greatness of His strength, mighty to save."

Christians then, more than Christians now, placed emphasis on, and attached importance to, the signs that prove the continued and exalted existence of the Crucified One. Protestants as you all are, and glorying as you all do in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, some of you have special need to watch, lest you sometimes treat the cross like a

crucifix, or put it into the wrong place. You are apt to tell young preachers that all they have to do is to preach the simple cross, and to do that you almost think is the sum of evangelic excellence. But that is not the gospel, whose story stops at the cross. The cross is a beginning, not an ending. The cross is the foundation; but my house must not be all foundation. "The cross a sure foundation lays" for the glory and renown of a certain mystic life—Christ's life—*for* us in heaven, *in* us on earth; and if we have only a dead Christ, we have only a dead religion.

We want signs and wonders proving that the name of the Holy One, great in the midst of us, is not the I *was*, but the I *am;* signs and wonders through which He shall say to the millions of startled London, "I am He that *liveth* and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore;" *real* signs and *real* wonders, for we are forced to say that the members of our churches are not all wonders. If any are content to live simply introspective and prudential lives; if any are satisfied with a dead average and a dull standstill; if any who are hard students to get other kinds of knowledge, are content that their Biblical knowledge should be a mere litter of second-hand and confused particulars; if any are peculiar people on one day in the week, and common people, like other people, every other day—what signs are *they* to those who believe not? Pointing to one of them, the caviller might say, "*That* man a wonder and a sign! Why it needs no living Christ to make a commonplace Christian like that; I could do it myself." But it stills even the enemy and avenger when he sees with intense distinctness that the change made in a man by conversion is so wonderful that no mere man could make it, and so is forced to say, "That *is* a Christian, and no mistake!" Such a wonder is a sign, and the wonderful multiplication of such wonderful things will waken up the cry all around

us, "We will go with you, for we see that God is with you!" Such were the wonders that the first disciples asked for and had. We often ask and have not; how is that? Their prayers seemed to shake heaven open in a minute; how did they do it? Did the secret die with them? The fact is, the secret was not in what they said, but in what they were. The *men* were the prayers.

II. We have now travelled up to the practical question—*What was it that made their prayer for signs and wonders so effectual?*

1. Mark this to begin with—*they really and truly thought of their God as One to whom they could say Thou!* Though they reverenced Him as the "High and Lofty One," they knew that He heard what they said to Him, just as any other friend would who was in the room at the same time. This comes out in the way they began to speak. Their prayer opened with the words, "Lord, *Thou* art the God." The God recognised by some of our neighbours is only that infinite something which modern science calls *It;* that which we are told "acts with fearful uniformity, stern as fate, absolute as tyranny, merciless as death; too vast for praise, too inexorable to propitiate; it has no ear for prayer, no heart for sympathy, no arm for salvation." I must mind, lest as I walk with men of this creed, I catch in any degree the infection of their theology. A certain famous German, at a certain stage of his spiritual life, though he was at the time a critical writer on the side of Christianity, said to one of us, "O that I could say *Thou* to my God, as you do!" For myself, I should feel that unless I could at the very least say that, my prayer for wonders could have no power.

Look at *the use which these petitioners made of Christ's name.* "Grant," said they, "that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child (or servant) Jesus." "Of course, we do the same," is the language of your mental

protest; but, gentlemen, forgive me for saying that this is not always matter of course, and that the most keen and vital man among you may sometimes find himself sleepily repeating the phrase, "in the name of Christ," as if it had only a talismanic value, or as if it only belonged to the etiquette of a temple service, or as if it only served to round off the language of prayer into a fit symmetrical close. It is one thing thus to use it, and another thing to use it with a fresh and fresh sense of the life there is in its meaning. If in faith we did so, our prayers, while we prayed for right things, would be irresistible as omnipotence; for the name is the *person*. When any one says "Use my name," and I do so, then, for the end in question, I am in that minute that person. My voice, for the minute, is his voice; my standing his standing; and my prayer his prayer. When, for instance, in the sphere of my secularities, I ask for certain values in the name that is written on a cheque, the question is not what my name is, but what that name is worth. What will they say to *it* at the bank? is it what they call in the City "a good name"? does it mean money? and the best way to know, is not to argue about it, but to take it for presentation, and see if it will draw. The great King Jesus will forgive us, His children, for talking about Him to each other thus, although His infinite grandnesses must suffer much through being thus distilled through the alembic of our childish language, and passed through our poor similitudes.

Well, if, like the simple primitives, I really do use the name of Jesus in my prayers, and put my intercessions into His golden censer, they are no longer mine so much as His. From that moment they are charged with a new element, fragrant with a new aroma; their right is the right, and their efficacy the efficacy of His prayers, who said, "Father, I know that Thou always hearest Me." If, indeed,

I am in Him who was crucified, justified, and glorified as my representative, when I pray it is Christ who prays, and, asking what His Spirit teaches me, the Father will refuse me nothing.

There is a third peculiarity in what was done by these petitioners, and that is, *they made a fair trial of social prayer;* for we are told that they "lifted up their voices with one accord." "Well," it may be said, "do not we the same?" I doubt it. Just think. "One accord" is a term of music. A true prayer-meeting is not a meeting of bodies only, but a concert of souls. Hence the royal promise, "If any two of you shall be agreed touching anything that you shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father who is in heaven." It may be worth while to remind you that the word here rendered "agreed" is that from which we get our word "symphony," and so suggests to us in an exquisite way the Divine meaning of a prayer-meeting. Hands may meet hands, faces faces, and voices voices, without symphony of souls. What is wanted is a meeting of souls—souls that sing one tune, souls musical with one wish, souls borne on the chime of one wave. The people of whom we are thinking turned this ideal into a real thing.

When you say of persons that "they were all with one accord in one place" for prayer, you mean not only that they were all there, but they were all ready. Musicians must learn their music and tune their instruments *before* the oratorio, or what was expected to be heaven begun below, will turn out to be a crash or a nothing. Public prayer, to be worth anything, must be born of private prayer, and be the outcome of that inward life which began in "the calm retreat, the silent shade." "O come, let us worship and bow down before the Lord our Maker;" come from the curtained hush of your own holy of holies; come from having been sitting still, the man alone with the God alone;

come full to the lips with the unutterable experiences, the leaping life, and the ready strength thus found; come each of you from having almost felt as if his soul had left his body, and had gone up to the King of Grace to pluck by storm of passionate entreaty the blessing wanted—that is, come *prepared*, and so put together the voices of your souls with one accord, and see what will follow!

I want also to remember that they not only asked, *but expected to have*, the wonderful things they prayed for. At this very first reported meeting after the illustrious Pentecost they did not, like men with their minds in a state of timid venture and delicate suspensive poise, just whisper what might look like safe, moderate, and reasonable requests—requests not for wonderful things; oh no! but requests for things that even man would easily give, would never miss, and would never be likely to refuse;—but, speaking in the Omnipotent name, they, with the humility that is afraid to be afraid, asked at once, outright, in a stormy fire of glorious extravagance, for signs and wonders, and what they asked for they plainly expected to have! "Well," you may say again "do not we the same?" and again I answer, it is questionable whether we do. We do, indeed, sometimes hear the leaders of our prayers ask that "the windows of heaven may be opened;" ask that "mountains might flow down;" ask that "nations may be born in a day;" ask that "one person may chase a thousand, and that two may put ten thousand to flight;" ask for missionaries in the strain of the stanza, "O send ten thousand heralds forth, from east to west, from south to north." We allow that they often do make requests on a scale of sublime audacity which almost takes our breath away, but they themselves seem all the while passionless as praying machines, and calm as if they were only repeating a paternoster or saying off the multiplication table. They do not look electric, and

although they do not ask for a second Pentecost, I think that if they had it, and conversions came in the ratio of three thousand in one place at one time, some of them would be stricken with a panic of surprise as great as if they saw their own familiar river suddenly turn round and run uphill, or as if the sun were to rise in the middle of the night.

The companions of the apostles, however, looked for such things; and no doubt, when a man ran in to his friends, and shouted, "Praise be to God, more wonders!" the sentiment of the response would be, "Oh, of course; the only wonder would be if there were no wonder." For two reasons they looked for wonders as matters of course. For one reason, they considered themselves to be so in Christ as that they would of course be heard as if it were He, and not simply they, praying; for another reason, they expected the answer to come through the intensification and working of Christ's own life in them. While they acted in faith, they looked upon their acts as being, in truth, His acts; hence this very book which we call "The Acts of the Apostles," some of their children and grandchildren called "The Acts of the Lord." In the very first verse of it the writer says that he set down in a former treatise the things that Jesus "*began* to do," implying that in this He would set down the things that He *went on* to do; and we look upon all that is vital in the working of Christianity now, as being but what He is still going on to do. With such convictions the first Christians calmly expected wonders. What else could they expect? The wonderful is the sign of the Infinite. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and His name shall be called 'The Wonderful;' He only acts in accordance with His name, that is, with His nature: so, as the sun can only give out sunshine, 'The Wonderful' only doeth wondrous things."

Has the Bank of Heaven stopped payment? Are the

promises waste paper? Is the gospel a spent specific? Is Jesus Christ dead? If not, let us, like our glorious fathers, "attempt great things, and expect great things."

Theirs was the successful prayer of men *who thought nothing of their own doings.* This appears from their way of reporting results, which always kept God in sight, and man out of it. I think that we need to be on our guard lest, on the other hand, our way of judging the good that is done, and of bringing up our reports about it, should sometimes tempt us to estimate refined spiritualities by coarse numerical tests, and, painfully or pleasurably, to think too much of ourselves.

In carrying on our Christian work, of course we find statistics useful; but let us keep them in their place, and just take them for what they are worth. Let us remember that, to have complete statistics of spiritual prosperity, we must have not only statistics of conversion, but statistics of edification, statistics of love, statistics of humility, statistics of secret prayer, statistics of things that the right hand does without letting the left hand know; prophetic statistics—statistics showing the shining sheaves of a harvest a hundred years to come, springing from two or three dark seeds that some honoured servant of Christ, whose life is a poem of resolve and endurance, is now "sowing in tears." The much that is often made of numbers, and the emphasis that is placed on the tabulation of mere externalities, may now and then even lead a lowly man like that to think painfully of himself when he should be only thinking of his Lord. If such a brother should be here, let me remind him that there will be all eternity for his work to unfold in; that the delay of success is not denial; and that the lack of it just at present is no sign of Divine disfavour. We never read of John, the beautiful, the deep, the divine, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," that he preached a sermon at which

three thousand persons at once cried out, "What must we do?" but we do read that such was the case after a sermon once preached by Simon Peter; perhaps it was even the case after one preached by Simon Magus; the Holy Ghost, however, only condescends to give a general report about the impressions produced, and to state that to him the people of Samaria "all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God."

In recording the facts of conversion, of course, we know that the first Christians often gave numbers. Indeed, we are now in process of speaking about the three thousand reported to have repented on the day of Pentecost. Yes, but the secretary of that association happened to be inspired, or, I think, there would have been no such report. At any rate, the primitive reports do not specialise so many conversions as the result of Andrew's ministry, so many as the result of Philip's, so many in connection with the church at the North Gate, so many with that at the South Gate; say so many persons "sat down" at such an *agape;* such or such was the munificent sum collected at such or such a great meeting, Joseph of Arimathea in the chair! We are told that "many sings and wonders were done." "By which man, and who did the most?" would have been a modern question; but to a similar question asked then, there would have been no reply.

We are apt to be so dazzled by surfaces, by immediacies, by qualities that we can calendar with a trade mark, and by glories possible to be cyphered up, that there is occasional danger lest in our flurry we mistake man's wonders for God's, call things great that He calls little, or admire as heavenly some display of vainglory that is by no means from heaven.

In the British Museum there is to be seen a tattered broad-

sheet printed 250 years ago, entitled and called "The Most Wonderful Wonder of Wonders!" But when you come to read it, you find that it is only about some poor ghost that once just scintillated and went out, leaving in the air "a curious perfume, like unto brimstone." The circumstance is suggestive. Though I am rude in speech and homely in the fashion of my parable, the vulgarism that I strike at deserves nothing better. We really must take care what things we emblazon as wonders in the august church of the living God; and all the more so, because when we make much of what after all is merely human, we may be ensnared into the spirit of merely human challenge, competition, and display, and allow a subtle poison to vitiate our motives until the results are spiritually worthless. Only as we are kept from glorying in ourselves, and made to glory in the Lord, will the Lord Himself own our labours and hear our prayers.

Let our final note be, that here we have *the effectual prayer of men who were God's faithful witnesses.* He will not speak out for those who will not speak out for Him, and, indeed, only such speakers wish Him thus to speak. The principle is this—"I say that the Crucified One is alive. Now, Lord, work wonders as signs to show that what I say is true!" "Silence there, you men, back to your fish baskets, leave these high matters to the *clerici*, keep to what you understand, and speak no more in this name!" Such, in effect, was the language of the magistrates to Peter and John; but "when they were let go, they went to their own company," and there all the disciples cried with one accord, "Now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant to Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy word by stretching out Thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus." Like persons in like manner demand

that you should be silent. "For a good *work*," they say, "we stone you not, but we will not tolerate your words. Silence!" What do you say? "Silence! There is a time to be silent, but it is not when God tells us to speak. Silence! We shall have to give account of every idle word, but so we shall of all idle silences. Silence! Silence yourselves. Silence! Say silence to the step of thunder, silence to the song of spring, silence to the waves that slam round the rock of Britannia; but I am a Christian, and it is of no use trying to silence me! I am put in trust with the Gospel; I am a sworn witness for Christ, and all my life is one long stand in the witness-box; you mistake your man if you mean to intimidate my spirit or stop my declarations. Silence, indeed! I was silent once, but Christ cast out the dumb devil; and now what is this tongue for? If I hold my peace, the very stones might cry out! 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak of the things that we have seen and heard.'"

We are told that when the confessors, in whose steps we will try to tread, had offered their prayer for wonders, the answer came to it at once, beginning in the fact that "when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

May God Most High, whose grace made these men what they were, who created the courage of Athanasius, and gave to Rutherford the flame that fired his cry—"Your salvation, O my people, would be two salvations to me, and your heaven would be two heavens to me!"—be pleased to kindle in us all the same passion, make us all Rutherfords, and turn our total existence into one evangelistic service; so that it may be said to us, as it was to the men of Thessalonica, "The word of the Lord sounded out"—not from this or that

conspicuous evangelist in your Association, but "sounded out from you"—"from *you!*" And when He has thus in truth made men of us, let us come together truly to use the name of Jesus, fairly to try the power of prayer. Then, although He may not cleave the cloud above us, nor shake the floor below, He will, by His Holy Spirit, so shake *us* that we shall shake London.

V.

*PREACHING IN THE OPEN AIR.**

GENTLEMEN, some of your friends think it very strange and eccentric of you that you should be Open-air Missionaries. Should any one of them ask, "What is the great matter that you run down into the street about? What wonderful secret is it that your hearts are bursting to divulge? What electric news have you to make the open air ablaze with? What is your subject? If you can, tell me in a word!" You say, "Christ!" Then, should your questioner ask, "Christ! is that all?" you can only reply, "Christ is all." Speaking as one of yourselves, allow me to speak a little about the theme of our open-air preaching as thus set forth in the motto—"Christ is all."

We would not make free with that dear and sacred name, treating it as a mere sound along with other sounds, and saying it over and over as some persons say off the paternoster, expecting the name in itself to operate like a charm. What we mean is that this name indicates *all our subject.* But then, this subject is one of eternal novelty and eternal variety. When we say that Christ is all that we mean to speak about, we mean that this infinite subject is all. "We preach Christ and Him crucified;" not Christ and faith, Christ and something marginal, Christ and some crotchet of

* To the members of the London Open-air Mission, *January*, 1879.

our own, Christ and some particular doctrine magnified out of all proportion, but *Christ*—Christ as Priest, Christ as Prophet, Christ as King, Christ first, midst, last, without end"—and this is "all."

Of course, when we preach Christ in the open air, we have no time to enter into all these particulars, or to attempt any excursions into this infinity, or to explain the wonders of Christology with anything like exact scientific precision. The people to whom we preach would have little patience to hear all this, and, perhaps, little power to understand it: if we can but be the means of introducing them to the right Saviour, we are quite sure that they will, sooner or later, get all the right information about Him. Poor men and women, they are dying for want of a friend, and we wish to say, "Here He is, will you come to Him? Come!" It requires no long time and no vast scholarship thus to introduce sinners to the Friend of Sinners. This is what you do, and you believe that all the rest will follow. Sure as the Spirit of Life is in the act of introduction, so sure will be the happy consequence.

"The Open Air Mission." There is something like poetry in the name of your institution. *Open air!* Yes, but by open air the missionaries often mean open air with no colour in it, open air with no sparkle in it, open air with next to no life in it, open air that has passed through millions of breaths, and that has been stained with the sins of a city, open air over the spot where you rake amongst the social deposits, and where you get all kinds of complicated information through eyes and ears and nose; open air that blows death down the yard, and that kisses no flowers but flowers that the frost weaves on the broken white window-pane; open air over the cinder-path, not over the forest path carpeted with mosses, fringed with mists of hyacinths, and "arched with a trailing variety

of light!" Open air? Open reek! The people who eat and drink disease in the close air of their rooms, get but little good by stepping into the open air of the alley. I think with a thrill of the late Edward Denison's words, while spending himself for Christ's sake in a place like this: "My wits are getting blunted by the monotony and ugliness of this place. I can almost imagine, difficult as it is, the awful effect upon a human mind of never seeing anything but the meanest and vilest of men and men's works, and of complete exclusion from the sight of God and of His works, a position in which the villager never is." The people with whom we pass our lives can hardly understand the temptations of those who live in such places, and how desperately they need the Friend we there proclaim. They are tempted to have a delirious longing after this or that good thing which never can be lawfully theirs, and then to take it. They are tempted to think that home is hell, and that the dazzling dram-shop at the corner is heaven. Heaven indeed! Whenever they turn that corner, it is as if a terrible devil-fish lurking inside shoots out the lash of its tentacles, and draws them into its diabolic suction. They are tempted to think that churches and chapels are no places for them, and if they ever do catch a stray word of eternal life from an open-air preacher, and go home to think about it, home means one or two rooms, seven or eight children, a tired and harassed mother, the language of snap and growl, a crossing tangle of sounds, fretful, or furious, or fistic; and how in the circumstances can a man keep the Saviour's charge, "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret"?

These people do indeed want a Friend, but it must indeed be a wonderful being who is strong enough, wise enough, kind enough, patient enough to be their friend, and who is

Himself all that is wanted to reach their deep uttermost. We say, "Christ is all." He is ready to sail with them in their boat, to walk with them in their Galilee, to work with them in their Nazareth, and to save them from all their sin. "Nonsense!" cries a critic of Christianity; "what is the good of preaching to them? You might as well throw a lucifer match to a drowning man!" I allow that, while we keep up the preaching to these folks, we are bound to do all we can to get them better air, better food, more space, and especially, by all possible toil and sacrifice, to fight against their most awful curse—"The Drink!" But along with all these processes, as a help to them all, and sometimes as the first step to them all, by all means let us preach the gospel. Before now, we have seen the tenantry of a whole yard reformed, if not renovated, as the consequence of one person there turning to Christ, through God's blessing on open-air preaching; and such signs we are sure to have renewed.

Of course, your mission is not confined to the slums of which we have been thinking. Through you, "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets, in the openings of the gates, in the city she uttereth her words."

"It is of no use for an over-worked clergyman," says a writer in the *Times*, "to preach a sermon, however good, *inside* his church, to people who are *outside* it." The most respectable outsiders are your congregation, and you do grand good if you can gain the ear of such; but I speak of the slums and the back settlements, because there you are most wanted, and there you will render the most glorious service.

Now will you allow me, in all the humility of brotherly love, to make a few practical suggestions as to the best mode of carrying on this open-air work?

Never be drawn into a discussion about subjects that lie outside your own chosen one—"Christ is all."

Never hold a controversy with a policeman. When he says that you are in the way, move to some other place, even giving up what you may imagine to be your rights, lest by an inglorious wrangle, even "your good should be evil spoken of."

Never take your station near a place where any kind of public worship is going on, lest voices should mingle and make confusion.

Never be ashamed of your cross. Brownlow North said, that if he had been sure that it would do good, he would like to go through London streets bearing a large board on his breast, with such a text as this printed on it in capitals—"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Never be long. When the hymn has drawn the congregation, and the prayer has sought the blessing, deliver your message in a few words. Some of the most effective outdoor sermons that we have ever heard about were short. A short sermon in the open air brought the first disciple to Christ: "Behold the Lamb of God." A short sermon in the open-air brought Bartimeus to Him: "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!" A short sermon brought the dying thief to Him. It was printed by foolish Pilate, posted over the cross, read by the passers by, so that doubtless the sufferer heard it: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." "Lord, remember me," was the responsive cry, "when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Perhaps you never see all your congregation. Some who would like to hear you would be ashamed to be caught listening; but just round that corner, just behind that grim window-blind, there may be half-dead souls waiting on their crosses of ignorance and crime, who may hear some short sermon of yours about Jesus of Nazareth, and so hear that they may live.

Never be noisy. If you can, stand with your back to a

wall, with the wind blowing out your voice, and the open air will help you. It was said of the first open-air preacher, "He shall not strive," that is, He shall not *wrangle*, "nor cry," that is, He shall not *scream*, "nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets;" that is, while preaching, as He often did, within the large quadrangle of a house, He would not so lift up His voice that the wondering people in the street would hear it, and stop to say, "What is wrong there?" This I think is what the passage means, and I find that this is what the great John Wesley thought. Let me read part of a letter written by him to one of his round preachers, dated July 28th, 1775: "My dear brother, . . . scream no more at the peril of your soul. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not cry.' The word properly means, 'He shall not *scream*.' Herein be a follower of me as I am of Christ. I often speak loud, often vehemently, but I never scream, never *strain* myself. I dare not. I know that it would be a sin against God and my own soul." So, brethren, suffer this word of exhortation about preaching in the open air, with your motto, "Christ is all."

I must not send you away with only half a truth. Having made some remarks on one half of the sentence, "Christ is all;" give me leave also to say a little on the other half—"and in all;" showing the two in their connection.

"Christ is all, and in you all." *This describes our complete salvation.* Christ is all, as to the salvation wrought *for* us. Christ is in all, as to the salvation wrought *in* us. To be in all, He must be in each. Brother, is He in you? Hear Daniel Quorm, the Wesleyan class-leader. I quote from memory. "Seems to me that Paul made short work with self. Paul gave Paul notice to quit, and gave up all the freehold to the blessed Lord. I mean to follow his

example, and to say to my own self, Daniel Quorm, I *will not* have you for a tenant any longer. You are more trouble to me than all the world beside. You are so hard to please, and you are so uncertain, that if you do happen to be all right to-day, there is no knowing what you may be to-morrow. I mean to turn 'e out neck and crop, with all your goods and chattels. That is just what I want to do with my own self, my friends. My heart cries out, '*My* Lord Jesus, do come and live in this house, not like a grand stranger for me to entertain and ask a favour of now and then, but come in, and do You be the Master, and I will be the servant, and with all I have will wait on You.' That is what I want for myself, so that when anybody knocked at the door and said, 'Daniel Quorm live here, do he?' I shall be able to say, 'No, no; Daniel Quorm has gone away; he is dead and buried.' '*Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me.*'"

"Christ is all, and in you all." *This formulates the basis of our union as members of this Open-air Mission.* There is in Germany a band of Christian workers, whose theological basis has thus been roughly rendered into English:—

> "The only ground on which we stand
> Is Christ, and His most precious blood;
> The only aim of all our band
> Is Christ, our highest, only good;
> The only rule we understand
> Is Christ, His word, our spirits' food."

Whatever you may think about the poetry of this, you have, in the fact of joining this staff of preachers, all subscribed to its sentiment; and whatever your individual convictions are as to the modes of Christian profession, or the externalism of the Christian Church—and I hope that in everything that has to do with the interpretation of Christ's will, you have clear and pronounced conviction—"your

simple object as members of this preaching constituency is to preach Christ." "Christ is all, and in you all." These words tell of the power by which we expect to be effectual. Power of truth, "Christ is all." Power of life, "Christ is in you all."

VI.

"*WITH ONE ACCORD.*"*

WE, the representatives of numerous and various Christian churches, have met this morning in concert with innumerable Christians in all parts of the world, solely that we may unite in prayer for Christian families. We long to bring all the family love of the church into action to-day, and to turn it all into a great room of prayer.

It will prepare for this, I trust, and will be striking the right key-note, if I speak a little about a phrase that we often meet with in the inspired description of the Christian fraternity, the phrase, "Of one accord." The very first prayer-meeting noted in church history, and that which brought down from heaven the grandest answer to prayer ever known, was one at which the disciples "continued *with one accord* in prayer and supplication." To be of "one accord" as to what we pray for, it is needful that we should first be in happy accordance with each other. That word *accord* belongs to the language of music; and what we mean by accord is something quite distinct from simple sameness. In an oratorio, if all voices had the same quality and the same tone, if they all had the same power and the same part, the result would be something utterly inferior to accordance. That we may know how to realize this

* Address on Prayer for Families, at a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, Langham Hall, in the week of prayer, January, 1877.

accordance, let us think and pray our way through some of the words that we have just heard read from the Epistle to the Philippians, second chapter, the opening sentence: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of *one accord*, of one mind."

We have here four "ifs," also four recurrences of the phrase "in Christ," understood, if not expressed; for if we read out the full meaning of this sentence with the chain of "ifs" in it, we should read something like this, "If there be any consolation *in Christ*, if there be any comfort of love *in Christ*, if any fellowship of the Spirit *in Christ*, if any bowels and mercies *in Christ*, fulfil ye my joy." You must interpret every successive section of the sentence by that phrase *in Christ*, and by so doing you will unlock and disclose new and wonderful beauty.

By four tender and persuasive considerations does Paul urge the Philippians to cultivate that spirit, the description of which may be exquisitely summed up in this one of his expressions, "of one accord."

"If there be any consolation in Christ." The word "if" suggests no doubt, but is only intended to intensify the sense of certainty. Just as you might say, "If there be any light in the day, if there be any soothing shadow in the night, if there be any freshness in the blowing rain of the spring, if there be any fragrance in the rose, if there be any sparkle in the star, any height in the mountain, any water in the sea." So he says, "If there be any consolation in Christ." Of course there is! Then, sure as that consolation is in Christ, and sure as that Christ is in you, your influence one upon another will be consoling. As Christ prevails in us, those members of the family who have been trials to the rest will become consolers, the presences

that have made strife will diffuse divine tranquillity, and we shall be of "one accord."

"If there be any comfort of love." The comfort of love is the comfort of being loved, the comfort of having a loving hand to cling to, a loving heart to lean on, a loving voice to make music in our souls; the comfort of being even in the silent presence of unquestionable love, before love even speaks a word, or does a thing, or grants a gift; the comfort, when we are quite at our wits' end, and when we are stunned into mental helplessness by the stroke of some great calamity, of having a friend who loves us so that his very intellect seems to be turned into an organ of affection, and he loves us with his *mind*, as well as with his heart and strength, thus being prompted to think and plan for us with inventive and forecasting care. Who can question the comfort that belongs to that love? The question is, "If there be any comfort in *Christ*." But no, it is not a question; the statement is only put in the form of a question, to give it in the highest degree the force of an affirmative. *If*, indeed! Why, where can there be any comfort if not in love? and where any love if not in Christ? We have often found it. Just as in the old harvest field, the sun-struck child ran, pressed his throbbing temples against his father's fingers, and found comfort there before he died; just as a terrified, hurt, or hungry little one runs to his mother, hides his head in the folds of her dress, and finds comfort there; so have we often carried our troubles to God in Christ, there to find that "as one whom his mother comforteth, so the Lord comforteth His people." However diversified we are ecclesiastically, we all find our supreme comfort in the love of Him who says, "Love one another, as I have loved you." Surely you will not refuse! If, then, there be any comfort in love, and any love in Christ, let us be "of one accord, of one mind."

"If there be any fellowship of the Spirit in Christ." The temptation is to say, "It is easy to tell us that we must all be 'of one accord, of one mind,' but how can we be? When we see so much sensitive selfishness professing to be sensitive love; when we see so much suspicion, when we see so much vainglory, when we see Christians so unfair to one another,—try and strain as we may, we are quite unable to be of one accord; the spirit of man is not strong enough." But is there any possible fellowship between us and the Spirit of God? If so, then we are equal to the difficulty. There is such a fellowship to be had. This is understood in the charge that rules the whole paragraph. "Let this mind," or spirit, "be in you that was also in Christ Jesus." At first this looks like the supreme impossibility; for the Spirit that is in Christ, who is the Creator, is infinite, how then can we have the same? Only by having in us the same Holy Ghost that He had without measure, and which He is ever pouring, pouring, pouring into the souls of His people while they are asking for it. Our nature as Christians must be the same nature as Christ's, the difference being only in measure. We can understand it now. It is as if a parabolist said, "Burning bar on the forge, let the same fire be in you that is also in the furnace; little shell dipped in the wave, let the same water be in you that is also in the ocean; dewdrops that tremble and swim like drops of glory on the grass, let the same light be in you that is also in the sun; branches, let the same sap be in you that is also in the vine." So says the apostle, "Let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus;" that is, let the same Holy Ghost be in you. There is nothing impossible to love that has the Holy Ghost in it. "If there be any fellowship of the Spirit in Christ," "be of one accord."

"If there be any tenderness in Christ." This, as Dr. Vaughan has said, is the spirit of the language used to

convey the fourth persuasive. It is the climax of the appeal. Not, "If there be any sleeping lightning in the life of Christ, if there be any thunderbolt of wrath in His hand, if there be any scandal, if there be any wrong, if there be any outrage, if there be any harm to yourselves or to your fellow Christians by discordance, but if there be any "bowels and mercies," love one another. "Fulfil ye my joy," says the inspired old father. "Here is the measure that holds my joy for you; you have begun to pour joy into it, pour more into it, and more yet, and more yet, until you 'fulfil' it." "Fulfil" is to *fill full.* He meant to say, "You have not quite filled it full yet, though you have begun to do so. There are still occasional discords in your intercourse, and some of you sometimes are almost ready to quarrel. You silly children, what evil spell is on you! Be of one accord, and so fulfil my joy."

II. You see your calling, brethren, and the secret of our unity; now utilize it *by united prayer for Christian families.* We have found our one heart, now let us fling our one heart into this prayer. We are in a passion of concern for the children. We would make their cause our common cause, or family life is a thing of no denomination. If we are Christians, and simply as such we meet now, we are all "in Christ;" and our Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Fountain of fatherhood and motherhood—Infinite Father and Mother in One. Could all the love of all the fathers and all the mothers who have ever lived or will live in this world be dissolved and fused into one sublime affection, that would be but as a drop to the ocean, compared with the parental love of God. It would be less than a drop, because the ocean is a measurable thing. but God's love is infinite. There are no degrees in infinity. Our Father can understand you, fathers and mothers, when you can hardly understand yourselves. When, in some

great fear and agony of love, you hurry upstairs, kneel down in the dark, tighten your hands together, and feel after all unable to utter a word; He has put all that love into your hearts, He sympathises, He knows what you mean.

With all the might and mystery of your love, you join with Christian fathers and mothers all over the world, who in this sacred hour meet at the call of this alliance in their many assemblies to pour out their one prayer for all the children. We are now all bowed before the glory of the great Unseen, thinking, thinking, thinking one of another in loving intercession.

You think about this person, that person, and the other; you think, perhaps, of your own shortcomings as fathers and mothers; you think of your interest in "the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure," yet you think as David did when he thought about that, yet thought of his own household as being "not so with God," not so as he would have wished it, not so as he expected it would be, not so as it ought to have been. We think and pray with you. You think of some one at home, whose presence there is a chronic irritation and trial. We are silently praying with you. Or you are thinking about those bright little creatures in the nursery. We join our hearts and hands with yours, and carry them to Jesus in this still prayer, that He may now put His hands upon them; for it may be now or never. You think of others, perhaps, with more anxiety still,—beings beginning life, full of dash and sparkle and merry hope. Without experience, they are just going to try the experiment, feeling the unspeakable charm of novelty. You have no power to screen them, little power to help them in any way now, and you must let them go. If you could invent for them a screen, that screen would only do them harm, they *must* fight their fight. They must, they *must* go into the battle. They *must* go, some of them, into scenes

in which, without a miracle, no grace can live; they *must* go, carrying explosive natures with them, where the sparks of hell are flying. Some of them must go into social atmospheres which are infection to the soul, and into the "power of the air," over which Satan is prince. Some go out from your sheltering love, having sensitive religious instincts, to which false religions will make their most fascinating appeal; and if they are led wrong, it will be because "the light that leads astray" will seem to them like "light from heaven." In other cases, the only religion into whose associations they will go, will be but a mode of worldliness and a fashion of opinion. Others will go into the society of those who suffer reaction from all that—the society of men who have got to be impatient of dramatic show in religion, and from that have got into scornful unbelief; for it is now as it was in the days of Eli, when men, real thoughtful men, were angry with the priests, and when, because of that, "men abhorred the offering of the Lord."

What are our sectional interests and corporations before solemnities like these, and in a praying time like this? Let us, as those who are all alike "in Christ," be of "one accord" in our cry for help, making common cause, and pleading with our One Lord for our families. Let us send up our prayer in the cry of the woman of Canaan, and say, "Help, Lord!" What better can we do? Perhaps our earnest, quiet cry may cause answers to flash down and influences to go forth even while we are yet speaking, that shall be felt at different points all over the world. Even now, perhaps, one messenger-influence puts a hand on a youth five thousand miles away. Another is lighting down on the deck of a ship in mid-Atlantic, to touch some youth there. Another rests on some young man just balancing between right and wrong, to put him right. Another has reached some one in Australia,—some one almost at the

point of despair, who is saying, "Oh that I could blot out the last fortnight from the facts of existence!" and he is kept from despair by the mystic power of something now working in this room! We believe in prayer, do we not? Let us then give it a fair trial on behalf of those who will be wanted to carry on the work of the Lord in the next generation. We pray now, and we go home to pray. You will do that, and old ministers in the midst of their books will cry and tremble for the children, the boys, and the young men who are in the midst of this world, which is so full of that which even John the Divine, apostle of charity as he was, and gifted with the awful insight of inspiration, called "the devil"—"the world that lieth in the wicked one."

There is no help but in prayer, and there is no prayer like that which we all put up together when we blend our lives in Jesus Christ, and pray in Christ to His and our Father in heaven.

VII.

*THE FATHERS.**

GENERAL GRANT has just arrived at Liverpool. We all admire that great man, among other things, for his sound doctrine on the subject of after-dinner speeches. Being lately pressed to give "one,"—"only a short one,"—"just *two* words, come;" he did in prompt compliance say "No, sir." It would be presumption to think of copying that condensed grace and ideal brevity, so allow me to say all I can.

Let the topic of talk be *the fathers of this church;* and first, *in connection with the successive buildings* in which the church has had its home. It is naturally most interesting to me to be with you on this first day in your new building, for I am your very old neighbour. By your courteous vote I was once allowed to read through all your manuscripts, reaching over a period of one hundred and eighty years. Gentlemen, I knew your grandfathers, and it seems to me, though I know that memory is treacherous —yet I have a sort of impression that I was at the opening of the first chapel, in 1693. The scene is still very vivid and sunny to me. It was a shy sort of place, not exactly a chapel at all, but only a poor little metropolitan tabernacle. There was no soft beauty, there was no stern,

* Speech at the dinner, on the day of opening Maze Pond Chapel, 1877.

unrelenting grandeur about it; it was just a *tabernacle*, without even the ornament of a few badger skins,—a tabernacle of chestnut planks roughly put together by a carpenter. Birds of Paradise have dingy nests. After awhile, this pavilion of wood had to be taken down, and one of brick to be built in its place. When, early in this century, that in turn became insecure, and your fathers had to build another, the spiritual charm of the old place had become so deep,—so often had heaven touched earth at that spot, so often had the most living moments in some of the most living souls been felt there,—that, built as it was in a tangle of back streets and lanes, they thought it "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." These humble servants of God took such "pleasure in the stones," and so "favoured the very dust thereof," that not only did they build the new house on the same site as the old one, but on exactly the same plan and measurement, brick for brick, and inch for inch, for it was of no use trying to improve perfection.

We think of these fathers with a smile on the lip, yet with a tear in the eye. It would be well for our people if they had the same passion for worship, with the same ecstacy and constancy of tender enthusiasm for the place where prayer is wont to be made.

Now indeed you have burst into flower! If Mr. Luke Leader, Mr. Warburton, and Mr. Edward Wallin, the fathers and teachers of Maze Pond Church, could just now appear to us in their old forms, and with their old fashions of opinion, I think the surprise would be mutual. The surprise on your side would be nearly enough to take your very souls off their legs, and to make the very marrow of your bones turn blue. On their side, they would tell Mr. Cope in Gregorian tones, but in scriptural dialect, what they thought of him, and the scriptural dialect would not make what they had to say any more conciliatory. Perhaps they

would liken him to Zimri, "who slew his master." They might call him "a captain in Gog's army." Richard Baxter, in defending some of the epithets he used in controversy, justly remarked that such phrases as "child of the devil," "dumb dog," "blind watchman," "shepherd that cannot understand," are all scriptural expressions; and we know that they were such as controversialists of the day when Maze Pond began, were accustomed to give and take with great cordiality. I am pretty sure that they would consider the new meeting-house that we so much admire, and which is the concretion of so much thought and feeling, toil of brain and toil of hand, as being only one of the houses of Baal. Yet why should Baal have all the best houses?

You distinguish between fashions and principles. It is out of no disloyalty to your ancestors that you have given up some of their fashions. You have given up, for instance, the fashion of living in the middle of London Bridge, as some of them used to do. You have given up their fashion of the hourglass at the minister's elbow; you have given up their fashion of dress, both of body and mind; but you have not given up their principles. In their day they were for "Progress, Reform, and Enlightenment," so are you in yours, each carrying out these principles after the fashion of his own time. "Every one that loveth will prepare the best and fairest place for his Beloved; for herein is known the affection of him that entertaineth his beloved."* They would have said that as earnestly as you do, but their very reverence for Christ, as they understood it, would have kept them from extending the application of such words to so mean a thing as a mere material "place." I think, however, that you have expressed their principles and your own in the right way, and that you have done wisely as well as right nobly in so building as to utter your longing to give

* De Imitatione Christi, iv. 12. 1.

Keach out of conscientious objection to his "full choral service." There was no little misunderstanding between those two churches at one time, but that time has long gone by, and the controversial tracts on the subject, once so very lively, are now in the British Museum, dead as the fossil Flora. Looking into an American Ecclesiastical Calendar a few years ago, I noticed the grim name of "Tomahawk Church," but was comforted to learn on inquiry that this word of war was, after all, only given to commemorate a peace, and to notify the fact that on the spot where it was built, the red and white men made a friendly treaty, and in its ratification there and then buried a tomahawk. If there had ever been a doubt as to the hatchet being buried here, it was patent in the fact that Mr. Spurgeon, successor to Mr. Keach, had promised to preach this day at the opening of the new place built by the successors of the seceders from Mr. Keach's ministry.* No need to emulate our fathers in their musical fashions, any more than in the fashions before noted, but let us copy their fidelity to conscience in little things, not excusing ourselves from attention to duties that are inconvenient and unfashionable, on the theory of their littleness. What are little things? "Ah," said Professor Duncan, "there are no little things, for there is no little God, there is no little law!"

In thinking of the old worthies of this church, one could also mark their *great spiritual influence on the world.* Let no one misunderstand my use of that word great. Although you have on your own lists names of persons well known to the scientific, or to the learned in the law, or to scholars, your predecessors were not great in the sense of being loud or conspicuous in the world; still they had a great spiritual power. Let me read a hymn written by Mr. Keach; and while it may help to furnish you with data

* Mr. Spurgeon was prevented by illness, and Dr. Landels preached.

for a judgment as to how far he could express through the music of language the music of the soul, it will also help me to explain my present point, and to show what I mean by Christian social influence. It is about salt, and looks as if it might have been written to be sung at a "cold collation."

"If saints, O Lord, do season all
  Amongst whom they do live;
Salt all by grace, both great and small;
  They may sweet relish give.

But O the want of salt, O Lord!
  How few are salted *well!*
How *few* are like to salt indeed!
  Salt Thou Thine Israel!

Now sing, ye saints, who are His salt,
  And let all seasoned be
With your most holy gracious lives,
  (Great need of it we see.)

The earth will else corrupt and stink;
  O salt it well therefore;
And live for Him who salted you,
  And sing for evermore!" *

I call that beautiful. There is no disrespect in your laugh. These homely lines indicate the kind of great influence possible to people who live unknown in the world. Salt says nothing, makes no noise, makes no show, kindles no poetry, creates no scenic magnificence; nobody blows a trumpet before salt, nobody admires it; yet salt is the great anti-putrefactive, and "ye are the salt of the earth," says Christ to His disciples. Salt is a beautiful and striking name for grace. Such salt in the schools, such salt in the papers, such salt in business, is that without which society would not keep.

You have heard the period through which your fathers

* "Feast of Fat Things full of Marrow." 1696.

lived spoken of as "the good old times." I say they were dull, artificial, commonplace old times; they were be-powdered, be-laced, be-scented, coarse old times, bad old times,—but all through those times, fathers and mothers, masters and servants, quite unknown outside their own little circles, lived as "the salt of the earth," and for their sake and for such as they were, in this and in other communities, God spared London. "Remember your leaders, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Through all the spiritual trials of the last century, when men thought coarsely, talked coarsely, and sinned coarsely, —when men seemed to lose faith in men, and women in women, and both in great spiritualities,—and when even Dissenters to a great extent lost the faith for which their founders died; your fathers, God be praised, kept the faith; they believed in the Holy Ghost; they believed in the grand doctrines of atoning love, which you heard about this morning; they believed in the Deity of Jesus, that foundation of the foundations; they honoured God in their lives, and God honoured them. Mere fashions have passed away. But in the modes of your ordinary lives live out your principles as they did in the modes of their lives; in the strength of the Spirit, as they fought their fight, fight yours; as they served their age, serve yours; then, in the deepest meaning of the word, and with perpetual development of prosperity, "the glory of the latter house" shall be not only greater than "the glory of the former," but greater to a degree "exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think."

VIII.

*LONDON AS A FIELD OF CHRISTIAN WORK. THE PROSPECT FROM HAMMERSMITH.**

IN the summer of 1680, Matthew Henry, a young man just eighteen years old, set out from Worthenbury, and after a prosperous journey of five days, reached Hammersmith. It was a still, sunny little place. On each side of the road were green hillocks, brambly depths, and here and there white cottages. He went by the stocks, and then by the forge, where very likely he heard the *hammer* and saw the *smith*. From Hammersmith he travelled on to the fragrant village of Chelsea, where he stopped to call on old Mrs. Dyer. With the sweet, clear wind blowing in his face he then set out for London. On the ride to his inn at Aldersgate, his imagination was stunned with a sense of London's greatness, and writing about it to his sister afterwards, he said, "I never saw so many coaches. I should say that, speaking within compass, we saw from first to last above a hundred!"

Since this rousing ride, London has been growing greater and greater at a tremendous ratio. It is out of the question nowadays to find snowdrops growing on Snow Hill, to look for foxgloves in the Piccadilly ditches, or to shake the dew out of a dog-rose gathered in Chancery Lane. Green after green has been built over, and

* Delivered at Hammersmith, June 12, 1877.

Multitudes really seem to have, as poor Harriet Martineau seemed to have, quite a personal animosity against the Lord Jesus, and to hate the gospel as if it had done them an injury. Such anti-gospellers travel in the train with you every day. You often transact business with persons whose life, according to their own theory, "is only matter, which under certain conditions, not yet fully understood, has become self-conscious;" and who, having no souls to be saved, of course need no Saviour, and no Bible to reveal Him. Modern men of Ashdod, whose god Evolution might have Dagon for its symbol, "upward man and downward fish," change words with us in our pastoral visits. From time to time we find, to our surprise, that many persons whose faces are familiar to us on Sundays, only come to meeting because they think us honest, and like to hear us talk, but not at all because they are believers in the supernatural or the miraculous. Sometimes indeed we have doubters come to question us about that difficult and tremendous subject, religion, whose doubts are not born of the heart's bias, but of the spirit's torture. These often turn into the firmest believers. I am not now speaking of these, but of those who are proud of their unbelief as a sign of intellectual distinction, and the name of such is "Legion."

Besides those who make a profession of unbelief, we have to do with multitudes *who hold false versions of Christianity.* At the present moment, the most growing and influential of these versions is that which goes under the name of *Ritualism.* Some of the leaders in this are scholarly and mystical men, who act nobly according to their lights; but if possible, I should like to put out some of their lights, though by good argument, and never by evil personality. We may respect them, but our respect for individual ritualists must not silence our protest against ritualism; by which I mean that system which has for its principle "through the Church to

Christ," instead of the principle, "through Christ to the Church;" that which takes its laws for the New Testament Church from something later than the New Testament; that which virtually declares that the Jewish priesthood prolongs itself through the Christian ministry; that which connects with these notions the observance of certain rites and ceremonies that are only human fancy-work, but that claim the seal of a divine right.

Now, say what you will, this ritualism is growing. Your children will have to pass through the power of its spells at school, or at college, or in their rise in life. When your good friend and neighbour the vicar advertises for a curate "with sound, but not extreme principles," most of the applicants will be more or less ritualistic. Almost wherever you go outside your home-life you get into a climate of opinion that is more or less affected by this mimicry of papal churchism. When I mark these things; when I see that great questions—questions about inspired theology, questions about "the love that passeth knowledge," questions about the springs of "the peace that passeth all understanding," questions about "things that angels desire to look into," are changing and dwindling into questions about the religiousness of certain attitudes of the body, or certain quarters of the sky; questions about a change of linen,—when, where and how,—questions like that which Sir James Stephen has decided lately, as to whether two persons standing at opposite ends of a table —one *here*, one *there*, for instance—may be said to stand *before* it,—yes or no? (Sir James thinks yes;) questions as to whether the word wafer describes this or that particular substance, or no substance at all! When I find these to be the questions of the day, I feel stir within me the grace of indignation. Do you laugh? Surely it is the laugh not of levity, but of gravity. There are things about which it

is written, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh," and at the thought of this we shiver and cry, "O God, do not laugh at us!" When I know what sin is, when I know what a Saviour is, when I know what it is to pass out of black agony into marvellous light, when I know what it is to feel that I am only two or three minutes off from the flash of the great secret, but that being in Christ I am ready for it,—then I am in earnest, I have done with trifles; let others try to dramatise grand spiritualities, and to use the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ for graceful ornament or sartorial decoration, so will not I. It hurts me to see men play such fantastic tricks before high heaven; my spirit is ready to explode into a tornado of indignant speech, and I hear ringing in my memory the solemn prophetic words of Bradford the martyr, who, when the flames were hissing and roaring round him, cried, "O England, England, beware of Antichrist, and take heed that he doth not befool thee!"

These views as to the way ritualism is working, are in harmony with those held by the most educated Romanists: take for instance the recent words of Abbé Martin: "Ritualism is helping the Catholic cause, although at this moment it seems to paralyze it. We must never forget that it is working for Catholicism; and if the sight of the souls which lag behind, draw tears from our eyes, the sight of the many souls which shall one day be converted ought to console us and make us patient."

Such are some of the things that are working against us, and against which we have to work. How are we to do it? *Not*, if you please, *by our growing social influence.* I fear that you begin to look down the growing lists of churches, and to count your men. You are tempted to think that our rapid increase during the last few years has made us great in the world, and stronger to meet the foe.

We are not in the majority, do not think it. It is impossible that we should ever be in the fashion. Let me give you an illustration of your place in general statistics. During a certain recent year the chaplain of a county jail made out a sort of analysis of religious donominations as professed by the prisoners. Well, not to mention fifty-seven Romanists, fifty-seven of no particular religion, churchmen mustered six hundred and thirty-six, Dissenters forty-five, and of these I should not like to say how small was the proportion of Baptists. The Baptists were *nowhere!* You will be likely to find the same average in all respectable institutions of the same kind. In these places they always follow the fashion in religion: what was the average in an average jail would be likely to be the average in London. The low in the world copy the high in the world, when all are worldly together. Thousands of those who are high in the world, and who report themselves Churchmen as a matter of course, have never seen a Prayer Book, nor been inside a church, *since they were confirmed;* but in their opinion, our distinctive principles would amount to a social disqualification. We *may* be real silver, but we lack the hall-mark. Thousands who are low in the world feel just the same. A gentleman may admit that he certainly has been in jail,—"best men go sometimes, same as St. Paul and St. Peter—a gentleman's misfortune;" all the same, he reports himself a Churchman, for "he hates anything low." You see, I want to take down your consequence a little, and to help keep you and myself from trust in mere numbers. We and all the evangelical churches together would make, at present, but a small minority, and should have to press on against the mass and momentum of all the world.

Talk of numbers! I think that sometimes they may rather hinder than help us. Perhaps we must be weaker before we are stronger. We must revise our lists, and cut out some

of our dead wood, that we may really grow. This is the point I am coming to. I want to say with all possible emphasis, our trust must not be in a multitude, but in One—only in One! President Edwards said to a friend, "I am a cypher, you are a cypher, we are all cyphers, but God is *One*." When the soldiers of Antigonus asked the question, "How many are coming against us?" he said, "How many do you count me for?" Jesus says the same, making us shout, "If God be for us, who can be against us!"

With the understanding that the very name of our strength is Christ, and that the only thing worth doing is, in fact, only what He does by us; I go on to say, if we would succeed in our gospel crusade, every single member of this Association must do his part, and in some way or other be an *evangelist*. The Christian life is in its very nature evangelistic, and therefore so is the Christian Church, which is but the collective name for the Christian life. Show me fire that never burns, show me water that never flows, show me light that never shines, but never tell me of a Christian who consciously or unconsciously is never an evangelist. This is how the gospel spread at such a rapid rate in the first ages; this is how it may spread now. None of us must be stagnant men,--sleeping partners in the Christian firm. Christians! between us, we must manage to go into all the world with our message,—*you* must go, or send a substitute. But we must begin at home. When a church forgets this, God brings it to its remembrance. There was an instance to the point in the first stage of church history. The church at Jerusalem was tempted to say, What preachers we have! what congregations we have! what collections we have! what additions we have! when down came the flap of a storm upon it, broke it up, and scattered its members abroad. "Then they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word." The preachers were not

prophets nor apostles, nor pastors, nor men who had taken holy orders from a bishop's hand; they were simply men, women, and children. Like birds blown out of their nests at Jerusalem, like seeds cut by the wind from their stems in the garden of the Lord, "they were scattered abroad, and they went everywhere preaching the word." In the free, inartificial style of talk on common things,—on the road with chance travellers, at the fisherman's hut, at the forester's lodge, at the farm or at the mill, they preached, that is, they talked—of the burning topic of which their hearts were full. The work of an evangelist must not be left to the pastors. All this work must be in connection with, but in distinction from, a divinely called, highly cultivated pastoral ministry; for to be an evangelist is not the function of a pastor as a pastor, but his function simply as a Christian like any other Christian. In order to effectiveness, both pastors and evangelists must ever remember where their great strength lies. We who live in this fast age, when everybody seems to be in a strain, every soul in a passion, and when so much has to be done in public,—are tempted to lessen the time for what has to be done in private, and so to get spiritually shallow. We must, every man of us, find the secret of having calmness in the most bustling bustle, and stillness even in the heart of a London cyclone; we must be much alone with Him who is our Life, spend time with Him in meditative prayer, and so, *in*hale in order to *ex*hale. We must take *in* life that we may live it *out*, speak it out, sing it out, give it out, ever giving that we may get, and getting that we may give!

IX.

*HOW TO CHEER THE PASTORS.**

THE Association has this evening wrought the beautiful miracle of bringing the north and the south together.† As perhaps you know, I come from the sunny south, from across the mystic river, out of a bower not far from the spot where William Blake the artist, when a child only ten years old, said that he saw "a tree full of angels." Yet I am content to leave my blest abode awhile to be at a meeting like this. Our friend Dr. Maclaren lately said in a similar evangelical company, that "he was glad his friends had not come together just to say how they loved one another." If, however, we had only come together for that, I, for one, should be inclined to think it would be worth coming for. One half of the world of London does not know how the other half lives, but it should not be so with us; therefore it is a good thing for east and west, north and south to come and look at one another, shake hands, and do any little thing possible to prevent friends from freezing into strangers, or even the faintest film of ice from stealing over the well of our affections. Still, we must be sternly practical. What then can I say? "Say something about the Building

* At Highbury, April 17, 1878.

† A brother had just remarked that we should always arrange that the addresses should be given by representatives from churches farthest from the church at which the meeting is held, and so help Christian people to know one another, who but for this might be almost strangers.

Fund," a friend suggests; but, although I know a beautiful chapel when I see it, chapel building is to me a mystery. When I meet a man who can get the money for such a building, and can kindle enthusiasm about it, then, as Robert Hall said of John the Baptist, I am inclined to feel for him "a reverence bordering upon terror." But the subject is out of my line. Allow me rather to speak a few homely words concerning the question, "How to Cheer the Pastors."

The first thing I shall say is, "Let those who are *not* pastors, *get the chapels filled.*" You say, "This is the pastor's business." I say, "No!" The common theory is, "First, build a good chapel; next, get a good pastor to fill it." Against this I most cordially protest. The pastors to fill the chapels! How? You may perhaps remember the plan adopted by the holy William Grimshaw for filling Haworth Church. It is said that when he had read the Morning Service, he would give out a long psalm, then slipping away, armed with a horsewhip of uttermost virtue, he would visit all the public-houses, where he would apply it with swift, lively, and startling vigour, and so would drive out the astonished clowns before him to help fill the church. But though I admire his evangelic extasy, and confess to feeling a certain charm in his modus of expressing it, I fear that even if sanctioned by law, it was hardly accordant with the genius of the gospel. Besides, we are not all Grimshaws.

Dismissing this plan as inadequate, show me "a more excellent way." The general answer to my demand is sure to be this, "You have only to preach the gospel, and every chapel will be filled." *Will it?* "Good preachers are sure to get good congregations." *Are they?* An eminent writer in another land, speaking about universities, and of the importance of getting the chairs filled by the best men, says, if you do so, students will be sure to come, for "you have no need to advertise the squirrels where the best nuts

are to be found." Ah! but men are not squirrels. Squirrels know what is good for them. The little ants know where to get their grains. The birds never make any mistake about the berries. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but My people know not the judgment of the Lord." If men were what they ought to be, that is, if they were *right*, they would soon find out the good preachers and fill the chapels; but our very reason for preaching the gospel to them is that they are *not* right. Recollect that.

What is a pastor? Some Christians really seem to think that the word *pastor* means *evangelist!* No! every Christian here should be an evangelist, and "every one that heareth" is to say "Come." It is no gain, but a great loss, to turn a pastor into an evangelist only, instead of prizing him for what he is. A pastor after God's own heart is a man who feeds the people with knowledge and understanding. A pastor is a man who "feeds the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood." A pastor is a man who answers to the description in Christ's charge to Peter. John Newton wisely says in *Eclectic Notes*, "That charge is about feeding rather than *gathering*. It is not *gather*, but *feed* My sheep, *feed* My lambs." Among the methods of teaching and nurturing souls so as to feed them, I give the primacy to exposition; that is, to patient, plodding, unceasing labour to pray out, think out, and speak out what God really means in His Word, and this, in the first instance, is not likely to gather the multitude. It is for the pastor to feed; it is for *you* to gather. It is for him to clear away the stones and the veiling leaves from the waters; it is for *you* to say, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, let him come to the waters and drink." It is for him "to give every one a portion of meat in due season;" it is for

you to "go into the streets and lanes of the city," and by such sweet and loving compulsion as the Holy Spirit prompts, to compel strangers to come in. Evangelize, evangelize, evangelize! but aim first at filling your own "place of solemnities," and then, with God's blessing, your own pastor's work there will make more evangelists. Allow me to add, that even you must not be always at evangelistic work. If you are young, you very especially need a fair turn in the advantage of being under pastoral teaching in order to do that work well. You must absorb before you radiate; take in, before you give out; or else, not being well taught, we shall here and there find that some lamb of your company has become the bosom friend of some wolf or other in sheep's clothing; and that some have become like some of the Karens, who were lately such flaming but untaught evangelists, but who are now led captive by the Ritualist at his will. You ardent young men, storming along with an irresistible passion for usefulness, quite leaving the ministrations of a wise pastor, that you yourselves may convert the world, take care that the world does not convert *you*. First, get spiritually instructed, then make known the gospel in the best way you can, and by all natural and all divine ways, "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God," bring the people into the beautiful Gospel Halls that we are building year after year, then help us to pray for the Almighty life out of heaven, by which they may be born again.

To cheer the pastors, let every one *be careful as to what he thinks and says on the subject of pastoral success.* This is a fast age, when men are inclined to think that the lightning is too slow, and the thunder not loud enough. It is a commercial age, when "perpetual commerce is creating a

stockbroking habit, the habit of asking each man, thing, and institution, "Well, what have you done since I saw you last?"* It is at the same time an age of excitement, when people crave for the stimulus of a spasmodic, sensational religion, and are ready to imagine that in religious affairs at any rate the engine is doing most work when the steam is most blowing off. The best pastors are great sufferers from these tendencies of the age. Some members of our churches discourage the man who edifies, by leaving him for the man who only shouts the gospel A B C, and in doing so they actually think that they show all the rarer spirituality and the higher life. They discourage the pastor by holding up to him as the true standard some preacher who preaches to the nerves, and who therefore, to use a theatrical phrase, "fills the house." They discourage the pastor by expecting him to show, in proof of his success, the kind of immediate effects that are very likely to follow the work of an evangelist—such as many clear and definite cases of conversion under his ministry. Conversion is all they understand by success. The good man longs for it more than they do. He is ready to say to his people in Rutherford's language, "My witness is in heaven that your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me." He is right to feel this, yet it must be remembered that conversion is not the stopping point but the starting point of the Christian life, that the pastor was specially to deal with that life *after* that starting point, and that success in this kind of dealing never can be tabulated. The common idea of success is, that it is something countable, and something that vitally includes sensation. But all success is not the same success; we may apply to its glory the principle expressed in the words, "One glory of the sun, another

* Walter Bagehot on the English Constitution, p. 295.

glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, and one star differeth from another star in glory." Let us be sure that we mean what God means by success. Somewhere, I cannot now tell where, I have heard of a case like this: a deacon was speaking to a visitor about his pastor's want of success. No doubt he had often reminded his pastor of the same, with much condolence. "Well," said the visitor, "what is the proof?" "Proof? why, last year only one person joined the church!" "Sir, who was that one?" "I don't know." "You must know,—what was his name?" He looks into the church book, and finds that the name of the man who was the only one added is "Robert Moffatt." Then said the other, "Sir, when you added that man to your church, you added generation upon generations, and yet you have been making your pastor's life bitter by the dismal toll of that statistical complaint—'Only one!'" Do you know what they once rang the bells of heaven for? It was over the conversion of *one* sinner, *only one*, and it was there reckoned to be such a great success that it made joy in the presence of the angels.

Take into account this further consideration: *Our greatest success does not come to light within the range of our earthly lifetime.* Here is an instance. There was once an old couple named Zachary and Elizabeth. Well, I have reason to believe that these worthy people were on one occasion the instruments of turning to God three thousand persons all in one day, yet they never knew of it, and perhaps the fact was never so much as hinted at in this world, until it was mentioned at Dr. Culross's chapel on the 16th of April, 1877—that is, by myself, to-night. Who preached the sermon by which God converted the three thousand? Peter. Who was the instrument of converting Peter? Andrew. Who was the instrument of

converting Andrew? John the Baptist? Who converted John the Baptist? "He was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth," you say. Yes, but the Holy Spirit is not a mechanic force, but the mighty Paraclete who works through the truth, and the truth is applied by instrumentalities. Who were the human instrumentalities in this case? Zachary and Elizabeth, the child's father and mother. We are told, and with a purpose, that "they were both righteous before the Lord, walking in all His commandments and ordinances blameless." Well, of course they would be specially careful to remember the remarkable ordinance about the training of children which they found in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. This, then, was the clear and lineal sequence of the pentecostal instrumentality. Only the Infinite One can tell the infinite story of consequences. The three thousand converts were three thousand centres of converting power; starting afresh from those centres, the influence has been striking out and going on through checks, intersections, and interruptions ever since; it is going on to-day, is going on here, will be going on until it shall reach the widest extent of local diffusion and the last syllable of time; yet all this began in the conversion of "only one."

It is bad policy to discourage a pastor who is honestly trying to do a pastor's work, by dinning him even with the most sympathetic and affectionate croaks about his want of success, at the same time measuring that success by a merely numerical standard. The best pastor is too ready to be discouraged by real or imaginary failure. It is an old story. The words of Father Anselm come to me over eight centuries, but they sound as if they came out from some broken heart that quivers here to-day. "If it be not in the counsels of Thy eternal will that Thou shouldst by me feed and bless Thy sheep, what do I here? Why do I

stay amongst these tumults, if I am not through Thy grace to promote the salvation of my brother? Grant me, then, I beseech Thee, by all Thy pity, Thy heavenly consolation; for this heavy weight which Thou hast laid upon me, I know not how to bear, and I dare not lay aside. O God, the helper of all that trust in Thee, let not Thy grace forsake, let not Thy mercy leave me!"

Earnestness is a sensitive thing. It is all one to a stone whether you throw it up or down, but a man with a passion for souls is not like a stone. Tell your minister when his heart is low, that he is a successful man, for that sure as he speaks the word of God, and sure as he commits it to His blessing, that word "will not return unto Him void, but will prosper in the thing for which He has sent it."

To cheer the pastors, let every man *mind his own business.* Every man in the church has his own church business; let him find out what it is, then fill his own particular office, do his own particular work, and exercise his own particular gift, even if that office, or work, or gift, should show no particular effect all at once, or have no immediate relation to the great enterprise of saving souls. Different gifts of the Spirit are wanted to assist the life that is already saved from penalty, by carrying on its sanctification, or its enlightenment, or its comfort, or its power of usefulness. "There are diversities of gifts." Look at the difference between John Foster and William Grimshaw, his spiritual grandfather, to whom allusion has just been made. Both were members of the true church, and each had his own post of service in it, but how different! Bishop Butler could not have set up the first Sunday-school. Robert Raikes could not have written the "Analogy." Jeremy Taylor could not have given us "The Pilgrim's Progress," nor John Bunyan "The Golden Grove." Let every one be himself, and act "according to his measure of the gift of

Christ." Let the lark sing like a lark; the sparrow had better not try; yet it is a comfort to remember that even the sparrow is God's bird. In a great manufactory you see tools rough and smooth, long and short, blunt and sharp, straight and crooked, and each one has its own use. It is never worth while to turn the knife into a hammer, or the hammer into a knife. Better sharpen the one and emphasize the weight of the other. Ministers are often discouraged by this attempt to change forces and places, and by the inclination on the part of members to slight or ignore the service for which they are severally endowed, when such service is not conspicuous, or when it does not directly tell on the conversion of sinners. Let all join to cheer the ministers by trying to stimulate and regulate the working power of the church.

There is yet another way of cheering the pastors. *If you have derived benefit from their ministrations, cheer them by letting them know.* When Edward Payson died, his people came one by one into a certain solemn chamber out of which silence seemed to flow and fill the house. They lifted a covering, and saw his face fixed in its last look of delicacy, of entreaty, of listening stillness, and with the shadow of the smile left upon it by the vanishing spirit; they then looked at the paper which he had directed to be pinned on the shroud over his breast, with the writing on it—"Remember the words that I spake unto you while I was yet present with you." Then some rushed away in an agony of silence; for "words which he had spoken," but which until now had lain dormant in their minds, woke up—they believed, and told their faith. Oh, if they had but done that before! Will not some of you take the hint to-night?

Cheer up the pastors by *praying with more passionate earnestness for the might of the Holy Ghost.* In order to victory, what do we most want? More buildings? more

labourers sent into the harvest? more machinery? more men? "More *men?*" says an American poet, "More *man.*" Yes, that is the phrase; we want more *man*, through having more God in man, and more Christ in our Christianity, that while we publish the gospel, the life of the Holy Ghost in us may show that our tale is worth telling, that our holiness is worth having, that our happiness is worth feeling, and that our secret is worth knowing. Not for this alone do we need the Holy Ghost, but also for the purpose of making our message divinely effectual. That almightiness is needed in the hearer as well as in the speaker. We aim at nothing less than raising the dead! The Book calls unnenewed men and women *stones.* Of course we understand this in no mere materialistic or fatalistic sense, implying absence of responsibility, but as meaning that they are stones to God, having no more trust, no more love, no more responsiveness than stones have. Take a stone into the open air, and let the sun shine on it, it is still a stone; dip it in sparkling waters, it is still a stone; carry it into the garden, and let trembling bells of beauty waver round it, it is still a stone; speak to it, it never hears; strike it, it never feels; smash it into a thousand splinters, and each splinter is a stone. So man, without fellowship with God, is a stone to God; but bring to this stone the gospel leverage, and lift it on to the Living Stone; and at the moment of touching, life from the Crucified One shoots through it, and the dead stone palpitates and is made alive. God by the Holy Spirit works the miracle of changing the heart of stone into a heart of flesh. Brothers, "be ye filled with the Spirit;" then live the gospel and declare the gospel, and through your gospel words life will go out of your heart into the hearts you seek to save. All will be glad: new springs will be put into the ministers, and "much people will be added to the Lord!"

X.

*TO SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.**

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." —DAN. xii. 3.

I DARE to take Daniel's dazzling language as the text for my homily. If prose should never preach about poetry, nor the shallow about the deep, nor the common about the marvellous, nor the small about the superlatively great,—not only should we, one and all, be afraid to preach about a text like this, but should even be afraid to preach about the gospel, for every letter in the gospel alphabet stands for infinities.

My object, however, is not to dwell on the poetry of the language, but on its utility; and my prayer is, that the great Interpreter, in whose house we are, may show me how to find in it, and bring out of it, thoughts and considerations to help work. Perhaps, before now, you have heard preachers say, "Let us end with an application;" allow me to say, Let us begin with one, then go on to another, and, indeed, make this appeal from first to last only one train of applications—special applications of the text to the purposes of the Sunday-school.

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* A Homily at Falcon Square Church, on occasion of the anniversary of the Sunday School Union, May, 1878.

I. My first application shall be this general one, that *Wisdom is a practical thing.* The prophet is telling us what the wise *do.* In answer to the question, "What is wisdom?" Sir William Temple says, "Wisdom is that rectitude of mind which enables a man to judge what are the best ends, and what are the best means to obtain those ends." I am not quite satisfied with this definition. It may be good as far as it goes, but it seems to me that it does not go far enough. It sets forth not what wisdom is, but only what the kind of knowledge is that wisdom must have to work with. Let a man have all this knowledge—let him know enough to be able, if it so please him, to pour the light of clear elucidation over what was dim and the language of spoken picture or sparkling spray over what was dull—let him know enough, like Milton's evil angels, "to sit apart upon a hill retired, and reason high on knowledge, will, and fate, fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute"—let him thoroughly know all about the best ends and the best means to obtain those ends: yet, after all, let that man *do* nothing, and that man, with all his knowledge, has no wisdom worth the name; for, according to our gospel standard, principle must be translated into practice; a mere theorist is a mere frivolist; and we are only wise when what we *do* corresponds with what we *know.* In these stirring times of ours,—times predicted in the connexional sentence following the text,—times "when many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased," times of mental hurry, when crowds incline to the deification of mere knowledge, taking it for wisdom, it is important to distinguish the true wisdom from the false. This authority tells us that the wise are to be distinguished, not by what they feel, not by what they fancy, not by what they think, not by what they say, not by what they know, but by what they *do.*

II. My second application of the text is this, if you are wise, when you see souls going wrong way, the first thing you will aim *to do* will *be to use means for turning them.*

Souls in this world are all on their travels to some other world. Trains in opposite directions pass and re-pass constantly. "An old Christian," said a late father of the Church, whose words I forget, though I am delightfully haunted by his general idea—"an old Christian had been on the line all day. He is very tired, but he must be at home soon, for there is only one more tunnel now. All at once he shoots into that, then flashes out again—out from the arch of chill, dark death—out into the infinite open—out of the shadow into the sun, finding in a moment of beautiful, unspeakable surprise that his train has stopped in the midst of the city. Ah! yes, and there is no need to turn those who are travelling *up*,—up to the land of triumph and the city of unpictured, unpicturable bliss; but, to use for a moment longer this modern simile, many, yes, *many* are in the *down* train, and they ride like the wind wrong way!"

This is not the alarum rung by a few narrow notionists, nor even an opinion restricted to ordinary professors of religion. A few years ago, Thomas Carlyle, speaking of English society, cried, "We are shooting Niagara!" and what was this but saying in his own style of picturesque intensity the very same thing? At the present time, a distinguished Positivist points to certain of our social insanities, to our commercial immoralities, points to sins against the marriage law, points to the cost of pauperism and the enormous cost of crime, points to the revelations in our law courts, to the aspect of our streets at night, and to the low tone of average life, and then declares, in language strong as our own, that English life "drives wrong way." Some indeed say "No" to this; some say "Yes,

it is so, but we only want broader views," as if a broader road could set right those who are going wrong. Other some seek consolation in the doctrine that truth is only advancing in a spiral, and that all will come right at last somehow, as if, though men do set out from London to Liverpool, they will be sure to reach Plymouth in the long run. But, after all, what can the opinions of men matter, when He who is the contemporary of all ages has said, and is still saying, "Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat"? Then many are going wrong way, Christ says so! That is no charity that challenges the charity of Christ, and no wisdom that seeks to soften the sharpness of His language, or tone down the thunders of His love.

When it is indisputable that many are going wrong way, the question is, what is the first thing wanted? Strange to tell, the popular answer to this question is only "Progress!" and this word progress is supposed to condense into itself the sum total of wise advice. Progress, progress, progress! this is the modern shibboleth. Progress, we say, progress in what? Progress in secularities, —in the arts and sciences,—in the languages,—in the laws,—in the politics of this life, when sure as law, and fast as time, we are travelling to another! Progress in that which will give to the greatest number the greatest happiness of the five senses, though in a few minutes we shall have to live without the five senses,—without these hands and feet, these fibres of life and organs of sensation, and have nothing left of ourselves but ourselves! Why, this progress is only progress in paint and polish, carpet and curtain, progress in the furniture of the locomotive, progress *inside* the trains, progress that has nothing to do with direction. All this in its own place, no doubt, is right, and the company should see to it; but it would be foolish

to confound the distinction between two different kinds of progress; for suppose we have secured progress of this kind, progress in appliances, until the minimum of risks is reached, and the maximum of that which can make the journey swift, smooth, and tolerable; progress in rich variety and delicate elegance of accommodation; progress in every refinement, until each vehicle is like home in motion, or school in motion, or rest in motion, if all the while the train is running wrong way, what has this kind of progress to do with the first question? Taking that train as the momentary type of the ungodly who are all the while boasting of modern progress, I say *progress*, I should think there *is* progress, but not progress to the better times and the blest abode; progress, but not to the land where life reaches its perfection, and man has rest. Progress? But there must be a crash on the line somewhere! Progress? the progress is progress over a precipice!

To stop a boat at the pitch of a cataract, to turn a train as it flies like light along the line, who could do the one or the other? Then who can turn *souls* that rush wrong way? and who can stop the immortal hurling on with gathering momentum to make this tremendous leap in the dark? The very thought is panic. Help! God Himself has given out of heaven, on purpose to work the miracle of mercy wanted, an instrument of marvellous leverage, called the Gospel, and this instrument He works by the hands of His people. If we are wise, when we look on all the works done under the sun, and make a comparison between them and this, we say, the only work worth talking about and worth caring for, the only work worth being hated for, and worth suffering for, the only work worth living for and dying for, is the work of "turning many to righteousness."

III. My third application of the text is this, if you are wise, you will, in aiming to "turn many to righteousness," *begin*

with the young. This, to some, sounds like the violence of a theoretical mania, indeed, almost like a sin against the tender sanctities of childhood; and they sarcastically whisper, "The mere children have not gone far wrong, at any rate." Our answer is, "Then on your own showing, if you are wise, you will begin with the mere children." Say "they have not left the station yet;" you will at least allow that they are even now turned a *little*, if at present *only* a little, the wrong way, and so it is wise to aim at turning them right before they start.

Just a little right or a little wrong at the beginning may make a tremendous difference at the end. Says dear James Hamilton, "At Preston and many other places the lines go gently asunder; so fine is the angle, that at first the paths are almost parallel, and it seems of small moment which you select. But a little farther on, one of them turns into a corner, or dives into a tunnel, and now that the speed is full the angle opens out, and at the rate of a mile a minute the divided convoy flies asunder; one passenger is on the way to Italy, another to Holland." I say, why wait until the passenger is a long way wrong, before you aim to set him right? and why let him alone until he has reached the acute stage and agony point of peril? Blessed is that teacher whose God has given him grace to win a hold on a child at his first station, and give him the initial impulse right way.

I must not, however, be in bondage to this railway metaphor. It will only help me to express the general idea that souls are going at a great rate wrong way, and must somehow be turned. It will not help out the whole of my meaning, nor indeed serve me an inch farther than this point. It is not as engineers that we can deal with souls, it is not by steam power that we can turn them, and they are turned not in aggregations, but one by one.

From this point, therefore, I drop the railway metaphor as an inconvenience, go on with my appeal, and say, Gospellers, if you are wise, you will begin with the children!

Persons who question if mere children *need* the gospel to turn them, also question if they can *understand* it, and generally say to us, "You had better wait until they are older." Why, what do they take the gospel to be? You teachers, at any rate, should be quite sure and quite clear as to this question. Is it something about the geology of Genesis, or the origin of the species, or the numerals of the Exodus? No. Is it something about such questions as the topography of Gob, where Sibbechai slew Saph? No. Is it the doctrine of election? No. Is it the doctrine of eternal punishment, or the doctrine that the destruction from which Christ saves men is only a trifle, or a doctrine about the *rationale* of redemption? No. Is it the clearing up of mysteries from the gospel? No. As to the mysteries which so many seem to think we must clear away before we can teach the gospel to child or man, they have nothing to do with it. The gospel means *good news;* and, according to Christ, the summary of good news for us is, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." When all this is clear to the child's capacity, and he is willing to trust Jesus truly as he trusts his mother, this for the present is all you mean. Some say that a child is too young to be taught even this, and so to become a Christian; but what does Jesus say? and from what you know of Him, how will He receive the child who turns and looks Him in the face? Who breathed into that child the breath of life, and made him a living soul? Who made his hair grow dark, and set his tongue trying to talk? Who prepared for the little son, in the heart of his mother, the heaven of love that lay about his

infancy? Who put into the heart of father Job the fond wonder, that made him name one little daughter *Day* and another *Fragrance?** Who put life into that boy, so full, mercurial, and running over, that he really does not know what to do with himself, and can no more help his happy frolic than the wet spring leaves can help their twinkle in the sunshine; no more help it than the lark can help its ecstasy; no more help it than the stream can help its sunny glance, or the waterfall its sparkle; no more help it than the lamb can help its gambols, or the butterfly its wavering grace? Who knows all about his terror, when in body or in soul he cries out at the spectral dark? Who knows all the reality of the tragic sadness that sometimes makes his heart feel fit to break? all about his mistakes, all about his keen pangs after the first fall into temptation? Who made the things that appeal in endless fascination to his quick nature, the trees, the seeds, the sprouting stalks, the birds, the little puffs of golden down fluttering up to the hen that she may gather them under her wings? and whose book of life is it that has charmed all these facts into first easy lessons and parables of grace? Who, when on earth, stood to watch the play of children in the market-place, and when the disciples once said to mothers, "Go away, good women, the Master is busy, we cannot be troubled by these children, so take them all out,"—who said, "Suffer them to come to Me"? Who but Jesus? And is He one whit altered now? Let the youngest people try. "Dawtie," said a homely patriarch, "the Lord is not in some grand place a long way off, like the best rooms at the castle, far away from the nursery, so as to shut off the noise of the children." No, I say it certainly is not the will of the Lord that the child should be kept out of His way and out of His

* Job xlii. 14.

company, until we pronounce him old enough to behave himself.

Let a child be old enough for gospel music to be sung into his soul, old enough for gospel pictures to melt into imagination, old enough to trust *you*, and he is full old enough for a most exquisitely happy understanding to exist between him and Jesus; let him be old enough to be a child, and he is old enough to be a Christian. There is no time to be lost, therefore; but there must be one stage at a time. The grand essential is that he should know the true Shepherd, so as not to follow by mistake the voice of a stranger. Let him gradually be told all about Him that you can tell. Begin at the centre, then gradually go on to things in the circumference. He is not ready at present for all theology. The child who was old enough to know that it was Jesus who put a loving hand upon his head, was not yet old enough to profit from a sermon, even one preached by Jesus, like that on the Mount. I think, however, that Jesus would have had him led to hear such a sermon as soon as he could profit from it. You must not stop at the starting-point. Go on and on with the teaching process, and arrange for others to go on with it from the point where you leave off. Never think of church and school as two distinct republics. Look upon the congregation in which Sunday-school teachers like myself are at work, as but a senior class in the one great school. Not as sabbatic penance, but as glad promotion, when your charge is ready, pass him on, that the minister's teaching and yours may be coincident. Believe in us who are ministers; educate the boys and girls to believe in us, and if now and then some of your thoughts tax a child's attention too much, depend upon this, if only we are, through your prayer for us, alive with the gospel, so that our words are shoots from a life, or rays from a flame, there will be

some things that he will understand even now, more than you think, and others that he will remember, so as to understand in some future day, when the power of the Holy Spirit perhaps may kindle them into a burning and shining light. So, speaking as unto the wise, I say, Begin with the child, and from first principles go on unto perfection.

IV. Let the fourth application of the text be this: If you are wise, *you will perpetually go to Christ for qualification;* for of course no one can do this work but those who are qualified to do it, and all qualifications come through Christ.

One qualification is *pardon.* Have you the white stone of pardon? Are you a Christian? I ask you now, because it is not God's rule to save by means of those who are themselves unsaved. Once in history, ravens took food to a famishing prophet, but it is not the rule for work like this to be done by ravens. Once, a Judas was used as an apostle; but who would be a Judas? Once in our day there was an engine driver who from colour blindness was unable to distinguish between the signals of red, white, and green, and although for a long time the trains went all right, at last there was a catastrophe. Once now and then a man *may* transmit the gospel telegram, yet know no more about it than does the telegraphic wire know about the telegraphic message; but who would be like that? You may be dead to Christ, and yet preach Christ. According to an old legend, there is a certain midnight hour in the year, when the church bells of a certain village in Normandy are rung by dead people. As they swing in the darkness, and peal through the silence of the night, the listeners tremble to think that only dead hands touch the ropes, and dead ringers ring. We tremble to hear dead souls ring out the music of Salvation!

Another qualification is great *grace.* It is not enough to be pardoned: a man may have pardon, yet after all, be

but a minimum Christian; he may be alive, yet only just alive. To be a true teacher, more than this is needed. Grace must become your second nature, so that in serving God you may act and speak naturally. The youngest child is a keen detective of character, and he goes on observing as he grows older. He will see through mere surfaces of temper or mistake, and will know whether you are genuine or not. He will take his first impressions of Christ from what you are. You will christianize him, not by long lectures, formal advices, and stiff perfections of regularity, but by what *you are.* What are you? Are you actors? The child will know. Are you doubters? The child will know. Are you on fire with the love that can make prose poetical and labour light? He will know. Are you a sufferer from any unsanctified and crotchety temper? he will know, and perhaps your very goodness will make his badness, tempting him to hate Sunday, to hate the Bible, to hate the very name of a church. Is yours the religion that tells the truth, that is punctual to its appointments, that respects the supremacy of law, that keeps order, that is manly, that is fair, that loves much, that is willing to take up a cross and follow Christ? Then he will know. What shall you do, brethren? and who *is* sufficient for these things? Grace, more grace is the qualification wanted, and we know who will give it. Go to Christ for it. Go to Christ, the infinite ocean of love, holiness, and serene force. Go to Christ, not only in acts of special spoken prayer, but also in still times, when you are quite alone with Him, that so you may inhale His grace.

Another qualification, distinct from grace, for which we must go to Christ, is that which I may call *gift*—that is, the gift of teaching. A person there is mentally saying to me, "Nonsense! no particular gift is wanted. It is only a child that is in the case, and it is easy to teach a mere child."

Easy to teach a child! Try, and begin with the youngest who can talk. Perhaps if you do try, before you are aware, you will find that *you* are the child, and that he is the master. You fathers at any rate know what work it is sometimes to get a great spiritual truth inside the mind of a little merry materialist. Sometimes it is impossible to fix attention; and sometimes you are ready to think that Solomon in all his glory of wisdom would have been posed by the tiny queen who has just paid you a visit, bringing dolls and hard questions. Yet a child who is so perfectly good as to ask you no questions, to give you no trouble, and who sees no puzzles in life, is only one who feels no interest in anything, and who has never been roused to think at all. If parents feel this difficulty in training a quick, intelligent, inquiring child, of course you teachers who are not parents feel yet greater difficulty. The difficulty gets to be more delicate and complicated as life grows up. Besides all the other fitnesses, you need to have quick insight, great power to live in other lives, and a tender sympathy with the trials of young hearts, in order to train for God a class of youths whose life has reached the point where boyhood and manhood meet.

There is one youth who looks dull, and who has no present power of self-disclosure. Yet perhaps he is an Ellis or a Carey, like a rough diamond all unconscious of the sea of light within it. There is another who looks rude, and all your labour of love seems to have been thrown away on that hard nature; but at the moment you are thinking so, and fretting that you never can get him to be responsive, he shudders like a shot thing at the thought of some kind word that you have spoken, and he says nothing, only because he trembles between the sense of gratitude and the fear of tears. There is another, whose frankness fascinates everybody, but unless God is pleased to use you as an instrument to save him, he will only live to be a popular good-for-

nothing. There is another who lives all the week in a sceptical or a worldly atmosphere, and who is so easily influenced that he is apt to think by infection, and to take an opinion as he would take a cold; yet who is fine on the subject of liberality; thinks that every "man" should think for himself, thinks that every man should try everything for himself, thinks that it is not fair to condemn anything on hearsay, thinks that you ought not to call poison poison, until you have tasted it, thinks that all these thoughts are new and original, and is inclined to think that you know very little about the matter. There is another who has to pass his weeks in furnaces of temptation, where the powers of darkness are in full blast. There is no end to the varieties of spiritual difficulty that come under the pastorate of a teacher who teaches very young manhood, or very young womanhood. No hard and fast lines, no mechanical perfection of routine, no mere human education, will qualify you. What you want is a manifold *gift*, and you must perpetually go to Him for it, who "has ascended up on high that He might receive gifts for men."

After all, one more qualification is wanted, and that is *power*, power of a peculiar kind. Power distinct from the power of knowledge, though that is power; power distinct from the power of character; power distinct from the power of instrumentality; power distinct from the power of numbers. When any great work is to be done, we often hear a cry for *more men*. But there are things beyond the numerical power of *man* to do. The 105,937 teachers of the Sunday School Union, all trying together, could never make even one lark sing, or one primrose blow, and yet what a trifle would that be! The work we have before us is the work of turning many to righteousness! and if every one of the teachers had every one of the qualifications just now enumerated, and if we were all what we ought to be, our

sum total would only be a sum total of cyphers, and all our power put together could no more save one soul from death, than a cobweb could stop a cataract! What is the use of giving? what is the use of talking? It is right to cry to souls that are going wrong, "Stop, stop! Turn ye, turn ye! Look to Jesus;" but it is of no use all the while you work alone. Go to Him who still is saying, "All power is given to Me in heaven and earth: go ye therefore and teach."

Ask for that power, ask for it in the serene and settled habit of morning prayer, ask for it over that desperate young rebel, about whom Jesus has said, "Bring him hither to Me." Ask for it over a list of names spread fresh and fresh before the Lord. Drop what you have in your hands, and with empty hands go take the promised power. Live in the presence of Jesus. The old mathematician said he could heave the world if he could find another world to rest his fulcrum on. You have found the gospel lever, you have found the power to work it, you have found the other world in which to plant it, the world of secret prayer.

V. Permit me to make another application of the text, by putting emphasis on the word *many*. If you are wise, you will be clear as to the sense in which you will "turn *many* to righteousness." A close understanding of this may save you from weakening discouragement or practical mistake. We are all in danger of getting entangled in the modern snare of attempting statistics of spiritual success; making us think much of many, and little of one; tempting us to judge that if a man's work has a great immediate effect he is successful; if not, he is not. Owing to this false principle of estimate, those who are least honoured of God are often unduly up in their spirits; and those who are most so are unduly down. Owing to this principle, also, work for the few is often slighted in order to attempt work that makes more numerical show. The modern priest and Levite

bound for Jericho, there to do some glorious work for the many, hurry by the robbed and wounded *one.* At least, the one is often slighted for the sake of the many. Now I want to say that though the wise will turn many to righteousness, they often turn the many by turning the one; that though they turn many, they do not often turn many all at once; that though they turn many, it is sometimes only as obscure co-operative units who belong to that community of the wise, who will *together* turn many. However wise you are through grace, and however many you turn, I have no warrant to assure you that you will see the *many*, or that there will be any result solely and distinctly traceable to you individually. I am only sure of this; that sooner or later, in one way or another, individually or collectively, directly or indirectly, "they that be wise will turn many to righteousness." Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

XI.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY,

IN THE MATTER OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE.*

"I ALWAYS like to hear men in reason speak about themselves. What subject ought a man to know better? The right line 'I' is the shortest, simplest, most straightforward means of communication between us; and stands for what it is worth, and no more." I lose no time in taking shelter behind this sentence of a famous Essayist, because I am about to seem egotistical, though only to *seem* so. My object is simply to tell you my own reasons for saying, "I hereby agree to abstain from all intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to promote the practice of such abstinence throughout the community." Speaking for myself alone, and meaning to compromise no one else, of course *I* must say "*I*" again and again, as a pure matter of convenience and humility.

Allow me at once to avow that I am an abstainer, not in the first instance from scientific reasons, strong as they are; nor from the force of any argument about the wines of antiquity, or the wines of Scripture; nor because I look upon intoxicants as modern inventions; nor because I think that only those Christians who abstain care for temperance; —I am what I am in this respect solely on the ground of

* Delivered at the annual meeting of the Baptist Total Abstinence Society, May 2, 1878.

Christian liberty, and because it seems to me that this kind of abstinence is a mode of Christian liberty demanded by the times.

Of course we all rejoice to admit that in these Victorian times there has been a great change for the better at the tables of what is called "society," and that there the excess that was once almost a fashion would now be a disgrace. But this particular drinking habit is only one out of a hundred, and although this one is weaker, others are stronger, —at any rate, official returns show that increase in the consumption of intoxicating drinks is still going on at a ratio relatively greater than the increase of the population. When I think of this; when I see the damage done by the strong, growing, ramified organizations of the drink traffic; when, crossing London from end to end after a late lecture, after all the ordinary shops are shut, I see every street corner flare with the open drink palaces, and see them all crowded; when I see drink looked upon more or less as the symbol of good fellowship and generous hospitality, even in homes of refinement; when knowing, as a minister must know, the skeleton in many a house, and the shameful secret hidden away in the story of many a life, I reckon instance upon instance of subtle, slow, but sure ruin wrought by it on young men, and the like on women, once almost angels, but who, having sacrificed all their youth in the service of the feeble, have at last been tempted by little and little to sting into sensation their exhausted nerves, and so to bear the dulness of a slow and measured life without surprises; when I find that, as a rule, with working people the word "treat" means drink, that a "footing" means drink, that "sympathy" means drink, that many drink when they can because it is cold, or because it is hot, because they are busy, or because they are not, because they are sad, or because they are glad, or because of any

fancy that comes first; when I think of the multitudes who are born into the worst of all this, who inherit the crave and the drag-down, who pass all their days in the region where Drink is king, and where even the brightest and best they know of social life is interwoven with drinking customs —I feel an interest that is tense to agony, and a sympathy that is strong to indignation. My conscience will not be content with the let-alone principle. The religion that can float through all this wicked misery in a mystic trance, or a dreamy prayer, or a tranquil sentiment of security, is not the religion for me. I want to *do* something. What is the first thing to be done for the poor tempted multitudes in our back settlements? A voice says, "Preach the gospel to them." Yes, I know, but how? We must help to make them better animals, if we would help make them better men. It is not a fair stage now. As they now are, the gospel has not "free course." "Faith cometh by hearing," and how shall we get the hearing? Drink is in the way—by which I mean, not perpetual excess, but perpetual temptation to it. The Divine order of the great gospel miracle is, that first, man should take away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; that next, God may raise the dead who are sleeping behind it. Looking at the whole case, and not merely at this set of facts connected with it, the question is, what is the apparatus by which we can best move this terrible stone, and what act can most effectually emphasize the protest of the Church against the crying sin of the day? Then I say that the answer to this is only to be found in Total Abstinence.

Many persons have a natural inclination to feel as if there were three sides to most questions, and they often find themselves in a trilemma. Naturally, when total abstinence is first suggested to such, they are not quite for it, yet not quite against it, fearing "the falsehood of

extremes." It was something like that with myself, and I was slow to believe. But now, on the showing beyond all rational dispute that it really does answer the purpose, and that its effectiveness is not matter of experiment, but matter of experience,—my cry is, "*May* I help in it,—if I only *may*, of course I will!" There can be no doubt as to the liberty. We have no Christian book of Leviticus to regulate our meats and drinks. We are in bondage to no stiff row of rules outside us. Our law of daily conduct is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This is the law by which we are set free to apply the principles of the gospel to the circumstances of the times; and, for my own part, in the critical and desperate pass brought about by the drinking customs of society, I rejoice in the liberty which this law gives me to be an abstainer. Jesus does not say "Thou *shalt* drink wine;" then I will *not* drink it. Say that I have a right still to take my modicum; then, at any rate, I have a right to do as I like about it. Say that it is lawful,—I say that it is not expedient. Say that you claim your liberty,—I only do the same for my own; but, so far as I am concerned, although I cast no reflection on Christians who differ from me, imply no reproach, and will be entangled into no line of action that is at all dictatorial or coercive, God helping me, "I will not drink wine while the world stands." Soon as any minister makes up his mind thus, his friends remonstrate. Let us hear what they say, and what may be said in reply.

"Health will suffer." Then my argument is not complete, for I am not at liberty to injure any part of that which I only hold in trust for the service of God. But, after a fair trial, I have come to the exactly opposite conclusion as to the effect of abstinence on health. No one thinks that it will work miracles of healing. When a post comes for one Christiana, with a summons for her

to stand in the presence of the King, "in clothes of immortality, within ten days,"—and when the messenger gives as the token, "an arrow with a point sharpened by love, let easily into her heart, so that at the time appointed she must be gone;" it will not stop the working of that arrow. It will not set a broken bone, it will not make an old man young again, it will not mend a structural mischief; but if you accept, as I do, the definition once written on the slate of a deaf mute, and say that health is "happy life,"—I am convinced that in every average case it is good for health; and even if your case is not an average one—if you are forced to work at a rate beyond what is natural; if when your strength is used up in the high pressure, if then, instead of trying to make up for it by a sudden stimulus that only spurs you on to further expenditure of strength, you would try the patient use of natural restoratives,—if you, who are students, for instance, would not only become total abstainers, but give up suppers, or take at night only milk or oatmeal porridge, after the Scotch fashion,—I am greatly out of my reckoning if some of you who are now apt to feel cross or jaded, and even to have an unhappy colour on your theology, would not feel new as nature, fresh as morning, and rejoicing like strong men to run your race.

"My doctor orders me wine. He says that my constitution needs it." My friend with a fine vocal organ, who pulls out the pathetic stop to say this, had an illness ten years ago, and just at the first stage of his recovery the doctor ordered him to take wine. He took it like a lamb, and not only did so in the month intended, but leaving off all the other medicines, has persevered in taking this one ever since, though to keep up its first effect on "his constitution," it has been needful to double the dose. This is a common instance of the way a doctor's authority

is quoted, and I say that it is unfair to the doctor. Of course it must be understood that we must always bow to the decisions of true science, and that any case of special medical treatment is entirely beyond the province of our present question.

"There is no need of so much self-denial." Too much is made of the self-denial required. No doubt some abstainers have at first to fight through occasional sensations of almost intolerable sinking and unrest, but after that interval, what is this self-denial? Is it self-denial to abstain from that for which I have lost the inclination? Is it self-denial to have keener life? Is it self-denial to have something more to spare for books, for the help of others, and for the cause of Jesus Christ?

"You, at any rate, would be safe from the sin of intemperance, without this expedient." Perhaps. Yet I have done with all heroics about my own strength. Stronger, better, holier men than I am, have been surprised into this degradation. Even an Apostle had no right to say, "Though all men deny Thee, yet will not I in anywise." A fascination hovers about the brow of every precipice; there is a delirium in the moment of every temptation; and though God keeps His people from falling, He keeps them through the medium of appropriate instruments. No instrument can be more effectually protective from excess than this, for if you never touch a thing, you will certainly never take too much of it. Assuming, however, that you and I are not in present danger, bear in mind that I am now pleading for the practice of abstinence, not so much as an instrument of help to ourselves, as of help to our neighbours.

"I do not feel at liberty to waive my own right to use a thing, just because certain foolish persons abuse it." Not if by so doing you may help to save them from ruin?

Then you do not feel at liberty to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

"I am already committed to an open disapproval of total abstinence; and when once I have made up my mind to a thing, I never change it." But under the rule of a theory like this, in a world like ours, there would be an end to all improvement, an end to all reform, an end to all science, an end to all religion.

"Scripture is against you." As one Scripturist after another takes up his testimony against me, and nails it with Scripture, I still try to be courageous. One quotes with slow emphasis the oft-repeated words, "Let your moderation be known in all things;" adding "in *all things*, mind!" Soon as I can speak after this neat but cruel stroke, I say, "Those words are not in my Bible, and perhaps that circumstance may make a difference." Another is long and learned in proof that the wines used by our Lord and His Apostles were essentially the same as our own, and I am still meekly mute; another quotes the usual texts, and I am humbly deferential; but if, after telling me about the wine that Timothy was recommended to take, you are able to show that it was not a special weakness that called for the prescription, but only everybody's weakness—*and you are not;* if you are able to show that the law, "Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, means give it to him that is *not* ready to perish—*and you are not;* if you are able to show that the charge, "Give it to those that be of a heavy heart," means to those that be *not* so—*and you are not;* if you are able to show that you are bound to take wine because the Psalmist says, "Wine maketh glad the heart of man," yet are not equally bound by the same sentence to take oil for the purpose of making your face to shine—*and you are not;* if you are able to show your gospel warrant for calling

the drinks that are now working such infernal mischief in London, "good creatures of God"—*and you are not;* even then, after all your scriptural showing, you would not come within a million miles of the ground on which I take my stand, which is simply that of Christian liberty—Total Abstinence being, as I think, "a mode of Christian liberty demanded by the times."

"But I do not mean to be a drunkard." No one ever did mean to be a drunkard.

"I know when to stop." I doubt it. Experience shows that the man who feels most confidence in this respect is generally the man who has the least reason for it. From heredity, from habit, or from a peculiar social atmosphere, many persons are scarcely more able to drink moderately than they would be able to blow up a powder mill moderately, or to jump off from the top of a house moderately. "I am going to jump from our parapet, but you need have no fear for me: I know when to stop; I mean to stop exactly there,—just in the middle, between the roof and the road. What do you take me for?" When certain talkers, in whom I know the passion for drink to be only sleeping, speak of meaning to be moderate, and of knowing what they are about, their talk is to my mind no more rational than such talk about jumping from a roof moderately. They had better not even run risks moderately. Some of them are already beginning to show us that drink slowly poisons the will, impairs the chastity of conscience, and saps the pith of manly power. Even now they are ready to perish. They are like laughing voyagers in a boat near the great Maelstrom. Perhaps in a moment, while such laughers are charmed with the glass of the wave, the smile of the sunshine, and the beauty of the shore, *the ship no longer obeys the rudder*—they are caught—faster and faster, faster and faster they are shot into the swirl

of the terrible suction, and go down into the hell of waters.

To you who like drink, who see no danger, and whose will is already getting overpowered by it, I shout from the shore, "Men alive! do you know where you are! You are being 'drawn unto death,' and if you are saved, it must be now or never!"

"I object to making total abstinence a sectarian matter." So do I. It is not a sectarian but a Christian work to which you are now invited. Yet you must allow me to distinguish between party and *part*, sect and *section*. It seems to me that every Christian should do an urgent Christian work wherever he finds himself placed in the "Holy Catholic Church," and if that work be in its nature social, he should, if possible, do it along with his own immediate people, however they may be denominated. This is such a Christian work, for it aims to help our sorely tempted neighbours out of the spell of a great sin. It is found that, owing to circumstances against them being so strong; to their faculty of self-help being now so vitiated, and to drink being so treacherous; no graduated system of leaving off will do,—that nothing will do but leaving it off suddenly and totally; and you are now asked if you will help them to adopt this plan by adopting it yourself, even though at the cost of some inconvenience, and by the free sacrifice of a right. Keeping in mind their present irresoluteness, help them by standing with them side by side in this matter; help to keep them in countenance; help them to face the frown or the laugh of the little world they live in; help them, if you can, by trying to found and encourage places of refreshment that shall compete with the dram shops; help them to understand, by the language of a fact about which there can be no mistake, that you care for them, to see that your religion is essentially real, and to

say, "We will go with you, for we see that God is with you."

As Christians, we solemnly keep in mind the need of prayer before everything else. Even when total abstinence must go before a fair hearing of the gospel, prayer must go before that. Although it is a physical law that we are directly dealing with, there must be prayer to Him who makes all the powers of nature the servants of His will, so that He may now give His blessing on the good we are attempting to do, both to bodies and to souls. Closing some remarks on the maxim, "Drains before prayer," Mr. Ruskin—God bless him!—says, "Not that you will find me unconcerned about drainage. But if, of the two, I must choose between drains and prayer; why, 'look you,' whatever you may think of my wild and whirling words, I will go to pray." So, while we work without ceasing in this career, we will pray without ceasing,—pray that power from God may guide and prosper our words and deeds, pray that, through Jesus Christ our Lord, the Holy Ghost may strengthen in us, and in all our fellow-Christians, the *new life* which He has created,—that life which is in its very nature regulative, and is therefore called a *law*,—that law which is the law of *liberty*,—of liberty, not because it sets us at liberty to act without motives, or to act from wrong motives, but because it gradually sets us at liberty from every unfair bias, so as to act from motives that are shown to be holiest, best, and most reasonable; and then, I venture to think, we shall all feel joyfully free to help forward the cause of total abstinence.

XII.

*ON SETTING FIRE TO LONDON.**

I WAS once shown a brown tattered filament of a letter, dated Sept. 6, 1666, in which the Baptists are charged with setting London on fire. I only wish the Baptists would do so now. It would be a most desirable consummation, and I really think we might manage it,—we can but try. By London of course I mean not the London of surfaces, but the deep London of souls; and when I speak of fire, I mean real fire, that is, *life*, the life of that Spirit which we are commanded not to quench, the life that is in Jesus Christ before it is in us, and that comes flaming out of Him into us by faith.

> "O for the living flame
> From heaven's own altar brought,
> To touch our lips, our hearts inspire,
> And wing to heaven our thought."

To get this as an Association, we must ask for it. We do not yet fully know what a great prayer-meeting is. If we saw our people crowd into Exeter Hall only to pray for this living flame, we should say, "Wonderful! only wait a minute, we are sure the blessing is coming at last Oh, we shall have it now!" But what a poor little meeting that would be! What we want is a prayer-meeting

* At Westbourne Park, Oct. 23, 1878.

of thirty-six thousand, all the names in the registration lists of our London churches. Why not? In the essence of its peculiarity a prayer-meeting is a meeting not of bodies, but of souls. If, to-morrow morning, and every morning onward, every one of us should pray as he never prayed before, sending up a short, intense, believing cry for this fire, and should stir himself up to "lay hold on God," if every one should say from his heart, "Lord, I will not let Thee go without this grace," if every one should identify himself with all the rest, and say, "Please God, we must have it, we cannot do without it, we cannot, can*not* live at this poor dying rate. Come, Holy Spirit; come, Jesus Christ; Sir, come down, ere we die!" If thus every one, before setting out for the City, prayed God to send into all Christian hearts beating in the City this abundant and burning life, the life that can conquer the world, the life that can "stop the mouths of lions," the life that can trample on impossibilities, the life that can walk right through great mountains, the life that "can do all things," then, from whatever point such prayers begin, though from thirty-six thousand far separated centres, they would all meet at the centre and focus of all holy things, there would be one prayer-meeting at the meeting-place between God and man, the true Mercy-seat, and the God "who answereth by fire" would kindle us each and all with the flames of Pentecost, so there would be a great fire of London.

One effect of this fire would be *the destruction of many things that do offend.* Mere apparatus will never by itself do that. What we want is fire out of heaven. Mr. Arthur, in a book called "The Tongue of Fire," written many years ago on this subject, had a metaphor something like this: Look at that great gun; there is no power in the gun. Look at the shot; there is no power in the shot. Look at the powder; there is no power in the powder; all that

apparatus, a hundred times over, would only be a hundred times nothing; but when all is in place, let but a spark touch the powder, and instantly there will be a great blaze of light, and a roar of thunder, and a blow of many tons' weight will be sent smashing at whatever stands in the way.

Now look at our apparatus; there is no power in that. Look at Mr. Spurgeon—there he is; there is no power in him! Look at this your beautiful conventicle; I am proudly glad to stand here to-night and look at it with you, but there is no power in it. Look at our associated numbers; there is no power in these, for minus Christ, our thirty-six thousand members are thirty-six thousand nothings! But let the Holy Ghost fill and fire us all, then the glory of the Lord would be revealed, and His power felt, so that the report would shake the gates of hell, and be heard beyond the stars.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." By His fire alone do we hope to blow into the air the strongholds of wickedness, misery, and starvation. As the fire of the morning burnt down the darkness of the night, the fire of the spring burns the fogs and frosts of the winter, and the fire of health burns down disease, so will the fire of the Lord burn down badness, conquer sin, and "mortality will be swallowed up of life."

Another effect of fresh life from the Holy One would be *fresh enterprise to provide the means of public worship.* The fire kindled within us would not be *de*structive only, it would be *con*structive. It would not only burn down, it would build up, for it is life. Oh, we are not dangerous people! We should be sorry to see arching over London the horrible beauty of a flashing red midnight. We meditate no damage to ricks and machinery, to churches and chapels. We should not hurt the feelings of those who vote against us, nor through us should "the smell of fire pass on their

hats or their hosen, nor a hair of their head be singed, nor their coats changed;" but when it shall please God, by giving us more of His own life, to set our faith on fire, our love on fire, our faculties of action on fire, we shall get on faster with our new chapels, and no question they are urgently wanted. I was startled at this statement made in Mr. Samuel Morley's speech at the Congregational Union meetings last week: "London is one of the most heathenish parts in Her Majesty's dominions. If fifty-eight per cent. of the people were anxious to attend the churches and chapels next Sunday morning, there would be required one million more sittings than are provided. The most appalling truth connected with this fact is, that of the sittings already provided, not more than half are occupied." In 1876, the late Robert Barclay, one of our greatest authorities on questions of historical Christian statistics, made the remark that, "if all the churches, chapels, and buildings devoted to public worship in London were filled to their last seat, there would be still left outside the buildings as many people as the whole population—men, women, and children—in the cities of Leeds, Bristol, Sheffield, and Birmingham. As the writer walked at night through the narrow streets teeming with a labouring population, the question *how* this great city is to be evangelized, seemed to him to be worth something more than a moment's thoughtfulness or a passing sigh."*

It is almost a terrible thing for a Christian to live in London. For my part, Jesus Christ seems to be saying to me with great significance, "I know *where thou dwellest.*" Now and then the thought seems to wake up and spear me through like a flash of lightning. In the face of facts which have just been reported, I am tempted to lose my presence of mind, and find it almost impossible to speak in the cold

* Preface to *The Inner Life of Religious Societies in the Commonwealth*, p. xxiv.

and measured language commonly understood to be the language of practical men, so the practical men will very likely reprove me for injudicious violence. The other day the *Times* almost dared to reprove even a certain "most reverend" gentleman for irreverence, or something like it, because in speaking at a recent clerical meeting at Barrow, he applied the phrase "paroxysm of church building" to the zeal for building newly awakened in the Church of England. Why, "paroxysm" is the very word to designate the spirit wanted in this line of enterprise. Paroxysm is in fact the anglicised but untranslated Greek word in Hebrews x. 24, where the apostle speaks of "a paroxysm of love and good works; no one ought to doubt that chapel-building, from the principles we advocate, is a matter of "love and good works," and we want to see the churches in a "paroxysm" in order to carry it out. Of course there would be certain inconveniences connected with it. It is difficult to be considerate as well as paroxysmal. A paroxysm, from its very nature, is not a calm, prudential, deliberate thing; it is apt now and then to hustle you into a mistake; it is of no use to reason with a man in a paroxysm. Men who suffer from a dull brain or slow circulation, or men who hate fuss and shudder at show, or men who love the quiet company of books, men who are apt to think that, in religion, what is rackety is rickety, are apt to be unduly startled at what looks like a paroxysm. Those of us who have been wrong in this respect must be sorry for it, and put our small feelings out of the way. One and all, we must pray that God may kindle a burning storm in the hearts of His people, that in a glorious rapture of love they may serve Him with the trowel as well as with the sword of faith, and so help to get ready for the public worship of all the world.

Another effect of more fire would be, that when the churches have plenty of it, we shall have *plenty of suitable*

volunteers for the pastoral ministry. At present, all churches, established no less than non-established, lack volunteers of the right kind. Volunteers the ministers must be, or they will be nothing. While I sympathize much with the strong sense and persuasive eloquence of the words lately addressed to young men by the honoured President of our Union, inviting those especially who have the greatest social advantages to enter the ministry; for my own part, and I am sure he would agree with me, I would rather not say even to them, Do, do, do become pastors, but feel more inclined to echo the advice of an old divine, "Don't, don't, don't be pastors, *if you can help it.*" The man who can help it will not answer the purpose. We want quite another man; the man who says, "I must preach or die. Necessity is upon me, and woe is me if I preach not the gospel. The word of the Lord was a fire. Shut up in my bones, I was weary with refraining, and could not stay;" the man who is like a certain student who, when told that his precarious health would keep him from entering the mission field, said, "You *must* let me go, I *may* die, but I shall die the sooner if compelled to stay at home;" the man whose words, once set going, will ride on like a cavalry charge, and whose life you can no more turn than you can turn a tornado; the man who, if possible, will carry everything before him, who if flung, will fight upon his knees, or if driven with his back against the wall will stand—stand like a beaten anvil, stand as Antipas stood, one against all; that is the man for the day. We want a few such irresistibles. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He may thrust such labourers into the harvest." It is impossible to wind men up to such enthusiasm by mere machinery. The fire of the Holy Spirit can create them, but nothing else.

Another effect of more fire would be *more spontaneous*

evangelization. Ours is not an architectural society, only bent on building. It is evangelistic, and if not that, it is nothing. I hammer on that nail again; if we bestow all our goods to build chapels, and have not an evangelistic spirit, *we are nothing.* There are two kinds of evangelists. First, there is the evangelist in the ministeral sense of the word, as we find it in the fourth chapter of Ephesians. This has been finely exemplified in the evangelistic enterprise lately led off by Mr. Archibald Brown. He made one, and if God had given me fitness, I should have made another; but we are not all Red Cross Knights, not all sent on such a crusade, are not all fit for it; some have to "abide by the stuff." "To one is given by the Spirit" the pastoral power; to another, the teaching power; to another, the chapel-building faculty; to another, the delicacy of subtle, analytic thought; to another, the genius for finance; to another, the power of setting other people to work. "All this worketh that one and selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." But though we are not all congregational evangelists, if we are Christians, we must all be evangelists somehow. How is it that so many seem never to speak a word or stir a step in this direction? How is it that this work is so much left to the pastors? How is it that our people are sometimes so "forgetful to entertain strangers"? When you are magnetically conscious of a stranger at your elbow in the aisle, how is it that you sometimes set yourselves, with such a look of rigid resolution and armed neutrality, to study the ventilator? What must we do to cast out that dumb devil that so neutralizes the power of the church? Why should you be so quick to slip out of what is personal in service? and why should the pastor be always trying to find one person to fill this place in the school, or another person that place in a domestic mission, or another for the diaconate? Is the ideal pastor only a

kind of Shamgar with an oxgoad trying to prick and prod the people on to spasmodic and vociferous activity? Must we drag or drive evangelists to work? When a man feels himself to be a spent, pithless thing, when he is obliged to stop for breath, when he has just been speaking to Jesus Christ in Rutherford's words, "Lord, thou seest a poor tired man coming up far behind Thee," it is intolerable to him that so much evangelistic responsibility belonging to others should be left on him in addition to his own proper responsibility. When people as well as pastors are all "filled with the Spirit," there will be no difficulty in evangelization. Let but one love, yours and ours, be rekindled from Christ's burning heart, and it will "make this duty our delight." Love will crowd on and spring forward to do love's work. We shall be all alert and alive. We shall then find how true Matthew Henry's words are, "Grace abhors monopolies, and delights not to eat its morsel alone." Leighton has been saying to the churches for the last two hundred years, "You should not only go after sinners to their houses, but to their *ale*-houses," and when we have love enough, we shall go. The sense of effort will vanish—we shall need no hydraulic pressure, no forcing process then; the burning love of Christ within us will make an evangelist by a process easy, natural, and necessary as that by which the sap, the mystic spirit of the tree, lives through all its boughs, weaves all the laces of its leafage, breathes all its rays of green beauty, and kindles all the sweet glory of its fruitfulness.

It is to be feared that some churches make too much of what the world calls respectability. I have a great respect for respectability; but not for crystallized respectability, frozen respectability, respectability "faultly faultless, icily regular, splendidly null." That is not the kind of thing I mean. I do not see why status should be repellant, or why

culture should be cold—the true gentlemen and the most sterling students, when their hearts are set on fire, are the most cordial and loving followers of the Servant of servants. At any rate, Christian hearts must not be cold. A great thinker in France has said—"The chronic malady of the soul is cold." I fear that the chronic malady of the church is cold; but it must not be so any longer. If churches are cold, they will only "radiate" cold; if churches are cold, they will attract no souls from the world, for who wants fellowship with an iceberg? Men will shake off the snow from their feet, and say, "Lo, we turn from you!" When a church is poor, something can be done for it; when it is ignorant, something can be done for it; when it is small, something can be done for it; but when it is frozen, what is to be done? I lately learnt from a scientific journal how to utilize an iceberg. This is the only way. If you ever happen to be near the south pole, and meet an iceberg three times the size of your ship, all you have to do is deftly to fix into it a charge of dynamite, then to fire it with electricity, taking care all the while to keep out of the way as well as you can, and so *to break it up*. Nothing *can* be done with any kind of iceberg, but break it in pieces. May God bless, with us, all the other evangelic churches in this city. Grace be with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity! So may we all be filled with the one burning and triumphant life of our one Lord!

XIII.

*AGED EVANGELISTS.**

LUKE ii. 22—39.

THE first evangelists were old people. When the King of kings put off the glory of His heavenly state, and came into this world, no person pronounced His name, or even recognised His face on the day of His first public appearance, but one old man and one old woman. It is true that, soon as the angelic song, like a trumpet blown by heralds, marked the time of His arrival, and the strange star, like a banner out of heaven, wavered over the place, those who heard the one or saw the other were startled; but the impression wrought seems to have been fleeting as it was keen; and what there was of goodness in it was like "the morning cloud and the early dew." Eyes were holden, lips were sealed, a spell hung over the faculties of all who had heard or seen any signs; so that wonderful signs were followed by a still more wonderful incuriosity. This lasted for thirty years. During all that period, from all that is recorded, it appears that no one ever thought of Jesus as King of the Jews. As He passed along, no one ever turned to look back at Him; no one ever whispered to his companion, "Hush! there He is." Even John, His predestined

* Delivered at Cannon Street Hotel, at an annual meeting of "The Friendly Female Society, for the Relief of Aged Christian Women who have seen better days."

harbinger, seems never to have had a surmise of His mystic royalty; or, if he had, it was never strong enough to make him walk a few miles out of his way to make sure. After the first miraculous announcements, the only evangelists were the two persons whose story is now about to be retold.

I. The first *man* in this world who was honoured to be an evangelist was an aged man. He was an old father named Simeon. Historically, we know nothing about him, not even that he was old; but all tradition says that he was so, and it is the fair, inevitable inference from the spirit of the story that he had reached a stage when in all human probability he would not have to live much longer. I think that he began to walk up to the temple with short breath and slow step; that when he took a cold, he could not get over it so soon as he used to do; and that age had set a seal upon him, which, like the red cross upon a tree marked by the steward to come down, told that he was soon to die. Yet he had in cypher a secret message from heaven, by which he knew that he was safe to live a little longer. It looks as if he had belonged to the predicted few who "spake often one to another" in the dark hour just before the Sun of Righteousness rose, and that in answer to a great longing to see the Saviour "it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost," as we are informed, "that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ." We are not told when this revelation was made. If made in his early manhood, it must have been a strange, charmed life that he led ever after. He might dash up the blazing stair to save a sleeper from the fire, but he could not die; he might leap off from a bridge to save a child from drowning, he could not die. Whatever deadly air blew on his face, he could not die; whatever secret he might unveil and see, he could not see the great secret of all until he had seen Christ.

His case puts us in mind of a similar one later on in history. Peter was assured by Jesus that he could not die until he was old. When therefore Herod passed sentence of death upon him, while he was yet in the prime of life, he was quite easy in his mind about that. It would have caused no alarm to him if the warder had said, "Peter, get ready, for you must die early to-morrow morning; the axe is now being sharpened—hark! The men are now digging your grave in the yard, and the gravestone, with your number cut into it, already stands against the wall." When Herod would have brought him out to execution, "the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers." He slept in the lap of terror; slept in the face of death; slept as the little bird sleeps in its swaying nest—and why not? He could not die, for the Lord of Life and Death had uttered a prediction about him that implied the impossibility of his death until he was an old man. So, Death could not yet strike Simeon, for "he was immortal" until he had seen Jesus.

At last the long-looked-for express came. Did he hear in the air or did the Voice whisper in his soul words like these: "Go to the temple; go to the temple; the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come into His temple this day!" We only know that "he came by the Spirit into the temple."

There was no particular stir in the street that morning, as the old man hurried along, to mark anything out of the common way. No branches torn from the trees, made the ground green with their carpeting leaves for the king to ride over. There was no state carriage to be seen. The standard of the temple was not displayed. No special sentinels were at the gate. Loungers about it might have noted—but I think no one did—the entrance of a man carrying two doves; their eyes of meek, soft brightness, just

seen over the tip of a carpenter's flag basket; and along with him a village woman holding a child in the folds of her shawl. No one would be likely to look at that child,—yet that child was the King! This is one reason why He was not recognised. The people who were on the outlook for Messiah were thinking, not about a child, but about a glorious man. But how did the prophecy run? "He shall strive, and cry, and cause His voice to be heard in the street! He shall startle everybody; He shall be recognised at once! No one will be able to help seeing Him! In one miraculous moment He shall stand before the Lord as a massive, towering tree!" No; but "He shall *grow up* before the Lord as a tender plant." In fulfilment of this and every other prophetic word about His Epiphany, Jesus came into view, softly and gradually, as a child comes on into the life of manhood. Every Jewish child, when forty days old, was brought, according to law, to be received by certain typical solemnities into the membership of the commonwealth; and for this purpose Joseph and Mary now brought the child Jesus.

No one knows what kind of being Simeon expected to see, but we know that his faith was not shaken by the sight of his King coming as a mere child. All his soul flamed up. The old face shone like a lamp suddenly lighted; then, to the delight of the mother and to the amazement of the officiating priests, who almost thought him out of his mind, this servant of the Master in heaven took the child in his arms, and spoke like the prophet Isaiah in this joyful strain, "Master, now Thou art letting Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." Let no believer be afraid to die. God slopes the way to death. When the time comes, you will

find that, by little and little, He has cleared out all the impediments that now seem so great; you will be as ready to go as Simeon was; and if you look for Him as he did, you will find that Jesus clasped close to you is still "the antidote to death." You will also find that if, like this ancient priest, your heart is filled to overflow with happy thoughts about Jesus, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak;" and even if you have no set purpose and no conscious plan, that as it is natural for flowers to open and for streams to sparkle, so it will be divinely natural and necessary for you to be an evangelist.

II. The first *woman* in this world who was honoured to be an evangelist was an aged woman. Let us take short notes of what is said about her.

The fact of *her great age* is stated. The style of the statement is a little obscure, but the sum of its meaning seems to be that she was a widow about eighty-four years of age; that seven years out of the eighty-four she had been a wife, and that she was quite a young girl when she married. Then she had lived long enough, like Noah, to see an old world die, and a new world born.

She was a *prophetess.* This was a very significant fact, and in itself an intimation that the dispensation of the Spirit was at hand. With reference to that dispensation, God had said by an ancient seer: "It shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . . and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit." As the sun sends out shoots of glory and tinges of forerunning radiance to tell that he is coming; so, before the day of Pentecost was fully come, we have foretokens of it in the prophetic flashes that shone out from the souls of Simeon and Anna.

She *was of the tribe of Asher.* It was not an illustrious

tribe; for no hero, no king, no prophet, had ever belonged to it; there was no star in the long story of its darkness until now, when out shone the star *Anna.* It had, however, one specially honourable distinction; for to this tribe had been left a peculiar promise, the richest gem in the old family treasure—namely, the famous heirloom contained in the words of Moses: "And of Asher he said . . . As thy days, so shall thy strength be." The old prophetess could say of this promise, "I am its lawful heiress; my name is written on it, for Asher lives in me; this is therefore my very own; long have I known it, and always have I found it to be true. In my young days, in my days of happy wifehood, in my days of lonely widowhood, in my days of weary age; as my days, my strength has been." Every aged sister who has faith in "the Son of God, Jesus Christ," can say the same; "for all the promises," not the New Testament promises restrictively, but "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."*

"*She departed not from the temple,* but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." Looking and listening for the Lord of the temple, she thought that His foot on the stair might be heard at any moment, and she would not be out of the way when He came. When the temple shafts, crowned with lily work, flashed back the crimson sunrise, she was there; when the evening lamps were lighted, she was there; when the courts were crowded, she was there; when the last echoes of the congregation died away, still she was there; her spirit said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord—that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple."

She took part in making known the joyful tidings. Simeon

* 2 Cor. i. 20.

was in the act of speaking, "and she, coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." You say of a sudden light that flashes into your mind, "It came into my mind like an inspiration;" but the thought she had at that instant was not merely *like* an inspiration, it *was* one. She was looking for the Saviour, and that instant a Voice in her soul said, "This is He!" If, as we may suppose, she began to live in the temple shortly after her husband died, she might have been there one day when a warrior named Pompey walked in; might have heard the ring of his iron tread across the temple floor; might have seen him tear open the awful veil, go inside, and come out again to say, "There is nothing there!" At last, she had lived to see the great Lord Himself arrive; not, however, in the garb of a soldier, but in the guise of a babe. We try in vain to picture her delight. It had been her habit to speak about the glory of which her heart was full, to the people who came at the hour of prayer; and now, at this most sacred hour, we are sure that in her holy rapture she would stop this person, put her hand on that, and say in spirit, whatever her words may have been: "Look there, there, on that little child; He is all that we have been looking for: folded up in that lovely little life is all our Redemption; that bud will burst into wondrous flower some day. Whoever lives to see it, mark my words, that child will grow up to be the Redeemer of Israel!"

First things are significant things, and especially at the opening of a new dispensation. When therefore we find in the gospel story that the first evangelists were old people, both old and young should take the hint. Old Christians must never any more tell us that they are past service. God has no such word as "Superannuated" written against any name in His book. He will never place you on the

shelf; never class you with the "non-effective"; never say of you, whatever you say of yourself, that you are stiff, dull, good-for-nothing now, the sooner out of the way the better. The young Christian, joyful with a soul that colours all things with the freshness and glory of its own morning, can never say of the old Christian, "I have no need of thee." Let but the grace of God flourish strong and fair, a man is never so useful as when he thinks himself of no use. In many a shaded room, in many a retreat of honourable poverty, yes, and in many a stately hall of Old England, there are at this moment aged servants of the Lord, who, by the simple influence of their existence, are greater national defences than all the ironclads are, and who preach the gospel as truly as if they carried it to the ends of the earth; for the work of an evangelist is not the function of the foot. Though your foot may not now be "beautiful on the mountains" that you may tell the tidings of peace, you may preach Jesus without leaving the floor. So Anna "spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem," though "she departed not from the temple." True, you have not, like the priest and the prophetess, to speak of Him as an infant just visible, and with all His earthly life's work yet before Him; but better than that, it is your joy to bear witness about His finished life and finished work. If you show not only that He is *the* Saviour, but *yours*, and that He has done great things for you, whereof you are glad, you are in that measure an evangelist.

"Would you be young again?
So would not I;
One tear to memory given,
Onward I'd hie.
Life's dark flood forded o'er,
All but at rest on shore;
Say, would you plunge once more,
With home so nigh?

Where now are those dear ones
  My joy and delight?
Dear and more dear, though now
  Hidden from sight.
Where they rejoice to be,
There is the land for me;
Fly, time, fly speedily,
  Come life and light!"

When Lady Nairn wrote thus to her old companion about what Christ had done for her soul, her seventy-five years gave power to her testimony that youthful words never could have carried. No hand can turn back the shadow on the dial of time; no spell can change the grey hair into its first bright abundant beauty; no science can discover the fountain of youth told about in Spanish tales of old romance; but the grace of God can do infinitely more than that. It can keep the heart fresh, it can make the soul young when the limbs are old, and can transfigure the most sordid apartment into a Beulah of song and beauty. When strength is made perfect in weakness; when many years have run their course, and the believer stands in tried integrity and rich experience "to show that the Lord is upright, and that there is no unfaithfulness in Him;" when we are obliged to change the tense in speech about your labours, as Paul did when he said, "Salute the beloved Persis who *laboured* much in the Lord," but feel all the while that you are more "beloved" than ever; when, "coming in, you give thanks to the Lord;" when your inmost life can say, "My hand begins to tremble, but I can still take hold of the everlasting covenant; my foot fails, but it is not far to the throne of grace; my sight fails, but I can see Jesus; appetite fails, but I have meat to eat that the world knows not of; my ears are dull, but I hear Him and He hears me; my memory is treacherous, but I remember the years of the

right hand of the Most High, and delight to talk of His doings;" when thus you can preach Jesus, be assured that few evangelists do more for the gospel. No sermon moves us more than the sermon of an old, happy, Christian life, and no service more confirms our faith.

XIV.

"LORD, HELP ME!" *

MY dear brethren, although you are all honoured ministers and well-instructed scribes, I venture this morning to speak to you on what looks like a lesson in words of one syllable, taken from a book of Gospel "Reading made Easy;" for I shall offer a few simple notes on the simple prayer, "Lord, help me." Simple as it is, only let us, man by man, learn it and live it, and the year we now enter upon will be a year of power and great glory. Asking you to join me, let me show how I mean to use this formula.

First. Lord, teach me *to pray*. First, because this particular help is wanted first. I make no apologies for speaking on the high theme of prayer with a certain familiarity. The sublimest things with which we have to do are, at the same time, the homeliest; and prayer would be of no use to such as we are, if it would only be like a state ceremony. Then, I say, before we can get into a habit of prayer we want help to get alone to pray. The life that walks with the Lord in the Strand or in Chancery Lane, and that is on terms of sufficient intimacy with Him to cry for help now and then out from the thick of secularities, is only possible to one who obeys the order, "Enter

* At the annual meeting of the ministers connected with the London Baptist Association, Jan. 21st, 1879.

into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to Him who is in secret." But we need help to make time for this by resolute and methodical contrivance. It seems to be a point of Satanic strategy to keep us back at the last moment. Sometimes the tempter in disguise holds us in parley at the door until it is too late to go in. Sometimes, as Bunyan warns us, while we stand on the step we are shot at from the castle hard by; and sometimes we have to fight our way through dense resistance. When we are at last inside, we need help in consequence of another difficulty, the difficulty of speaking as seeing "Him who is invisible." You say, Though sometimes when I am in my room I listen to the silence, and feel as if the silence listens to me; though Jesus is real to me; though sometimes I could almost think that the Presence is just going to speak, or to step into sight; though sometimes, out of a spirit solemn with the hush of prayer, and with a joy that trembles, I dare to say "Christ is mine, and I am His;" though perhaps sometimes there is an infinite moment when I can utter the rapturous Rabboni!—on the other hand, I have never yet really seen the Friend who is my very life, and never, in experiences of keenest intensity, have I heard Him say, "Reach forth thy finger and touch my hand." Worse than that, sometimes I have but a dull sense of God; heaven seems desperately far away; the mystery of prayer confounds me; I cleave to the dust, and am not much more alive than the poor people of Makuta, when they lately looked with a stare at our kneeling missionaries, and thought they were talking passionately to the empty air. At all times I need help to still the hurry of my nerves, to fix the focus of my thought, and to remember all my errands. I need help to keep me from asking amiss; for, after saying that I have made a certain subject "matter of prayer," it often appears on review that I have asked our Father who is in heaven,

not that His will may be done, but that mine may be. Great, however, as is the difficulty, I must pray; for if I am weak in this, I am weak in everything; I must pray, for only while I pray I live; I must pray, for my life "is hid with Christ in God," and only by prayer does that life flow out of Him into me; therefore I say, Lord, help me!

II. Lord, help me to *love the brotherhood.* Never, perhaps, was so much love on paper, never so much love in language, never so much love in sentimental music, as now, and love between Christians is now looked upon as a matter of course. But if it were matter of course, it would not have been made matter of command. Only those can think this love an easy thing who have never tried it. It is easy now to love the Christians of the commonwealth, easy to love Christians at a distance, and to feel the most romantic tenderness for a saint in glory, but it is not always easy to feel it for one with whom we meet in a committee. I may speak about him in an inspired rapture, but let his temper clash with my temper, his weaknesses with my weaknesses, let his plans cross my plans, and his angularities grind against mine, then, Lord, help me! Contact is apt to shatter my ideal, and to make my radiant fancies fade. Christian love, however, is of no use unless it is of use in a Christian association. From the very fact of our Christian life we must be members of an association somehow and somewhere. All the branches in the vine are associated with all the other branches, and no branch liveth to itself. We who are present this morning, being associated in a special way for a special purpose, need to have this special reference in our united cry for help. "Many men, many minds." Differences of judgment will be sure to arise now and then in the course of all associated life, simply because it is life. The dead never differ; the living sometimes do,

simply because they are the living. A band of men who are all men alive, and all in red-hot earnest about a subject in question, each man being a distinct individual with a will of his own, may occasionally forget the fair "give and take" of life, and be liable to a crisis of neuralgic excitement, kindling words that strike and sting. Says the Sage of Chelsea, "What would you have? Would you sacrifice all qualities in a horse, to be safe from an occasional kick? Then get a dead horse. No horse comparable to that for not kicking in your stable." "Horses are flesh, and not spirit," and we are mighty spirits. However, let that pass, and let us accept the truth conveyed through this disrespectful metaphor. We would rather not have the unity that results from indifference; for so much indifference is only so much death, and with all its inconveniences we much prefer life. The grand desideratum is more life, only it must be life of the right kind, the one life which will keep us of "one mind in the Lord," even if we are not of one mind in all circumstantials; the life that is given to inspire our mutual ministry, and that will not only keep us right in great things, but will refine benevolence in little things: for who should be skilful in the grace of chivalry, if not the knights and soldiers of the Holy Ghost? Knowing this, each one of us looks up to Him who has the residue of the Spirit, and cries for all the Association, "Lord, help me!"

III. Help me to fulfil *my ministry*. Give me leave to speak out my mind about the pastoral ministry, especially about its main function, that of teaching, that we may make one common cause, and that each one may pray for the rest, as the mother in the story of the text prayed for her child, saying, "Lord, help *me*." The "pastor after God's own heart" is one "who feeds the people with knowledge and understanding." As Christian pastors, the one Book we

have to expound is the Bible—the book in which the awful "I AM" of the Exodus is speaking now—speaking with eternal novelty and imperishable freshness, in words whose divinity is more and more self-evidential, whose glories deepen, and whose meanings grow as we listen and gaze from year to year. By our own hard work in using the utmost critical apparatus, our own mental intensities, and our own tranquil, meditative prayer, we have to try and find out exactly what God means in this Book, that, passed through the fire of our own life, we may give out His meaning to men; not to men of the last century; not to men who as a matter of course take what we give them, do what we tell them, and who know only what they see; not to men like those of whom a lecturer once complained that they came like sheep to his lectures, looked like sheep while he spoke, and went away understanding like sheep; but to men, and to men as they are—men of to-day, with all the special sins, perils, passions, politics, puzzles, problems of conscience and fights of life that belong to to-day—men who will turn every question inside out, and upside down, strain it across and across, and finger every stitch of it; men whom we must hope to influence by virtue of our personality rather than of our office, and who will never listen with receptive deference to what we say, simply because we say it; men who are not to be imposed upon by sound, and who think, as Bishop Jewell thought, that "vessels do never give so great a sound as when empty;" men who, when Christ is preached, are apt to turn away and say, "Of course we know all that, tell it to the Sunday-school;" men to whom, all the same, Christ must be preached—*preached*, not taken for granted; *preached*, not hinted at; *preached*, not insinuated in an indirect and inferential way; for the Word of God is throughout only God's revelation of Christ, and without Christ even the

men who know most about the sciences must perish. While we stand up for Jesus, and fight our fight of faith with these men, we shall find that old Martello towers, the shirts of mail that dangle from the walls of Farley Castle, and their antique spiritual equivalents, are of no use now. Let us gratefully accept the hints given by Canon Curteis in this month's *Contemporary*: "'To the Greeks became I as a Greek,' said St. Paul; and so must the minister of Christ in these days make up his mind to bring home the gospel to his own countrymen, with all their faults and peculiarities, and to the Englishmen of the nineteenth century must become as an Englishmen of the nineteenth century, that he may by all means save some."

So tremendous is the difficulty of a pastorate, and so desperate is the need of help, that some brethren would take the law into their own hands, and abolish the institution altogether; while, on the other hand, some pastors, in a panic, "go down to Egypt for help," or try to help themselves by short cuts to knowledge, or cheap substitutes for labour. I venture to think that one false way of seeking help nowadays is the *excessive* habit, not indeed of preaching, but of reading other men's sermons. When I see such a reader with his book in hand, I feel a brotherly inclination to say, "That book will do you no good; you had better read a book about farriery. You call this your study, but it is only to save your study. In this way you are in danger of losing the use of your faculties for want of exercise; but worse than this, you are in danger of becoming a conventionalist. Even if the doctrines you preach are in the Bible, I think you found them, not there, but in somebody's sermon. That water of life filtered through several soils before it reached you." The disciple of Christ should get this gospel straight from Christ; and unless he does so, to borrow the warning words of George Macdonald, he is

in danger of becoming, not so much the disciple of Christ, as "the disciple of a disciple of a disciple." Another false way of seeking help now common is in the *excessive* use of our own old sermons, which habit seems to me like giving our dead selves to the ministry instead of our living selves. Says Daniel Quorm, "'Tis a pity that the Lord's ambassadors should ever come to be like them wily fellows of Gibeon, that took old sacks 'pon their asses, an' wine-bottles old and rent, an' old shoes an' clouted 'pon their feet, an' all the bread o' their provision was dry and mouldy. However good it was once, though it was tookt hot out o' the oven, the bread will get dry and mouldy, if you do keep it long enough, and so will sermons too. Seemin' to me that it ought to be now like it was 'long with the people of Israel, they were fed with manna that came down from heaven fresh every morning. David wanted new joys before he could preach, and we do too."

I venture to hope that no brother will long miss the meaning of these plain words,* and that no one will try to slip aside from their thrust. Give me leave to repeat, and, if possible, to repeat in more explicit language, two things. One is, my fraternal word against the *excessive* use of other men's work; but please to note that this is quite a different thing from a student's *use* of it. The other is, my most respectful hint as to the injury that sometimes comes from the *excessive* use in the pulpit, by any man, of his own old work. This also I repeat with emphasis. You will not, however, suppose that by "excessive use" I mean no use at all. No doubt some of you have sermons of such special value, and of such exact fitness to certain occasions, that it would be a wrong to the congregations if you only gave them these

* The whole of this paragraph has been added since the delivery of the address.

once or perhaps twice in your ministry. "Give us a good thing two or three times over,"* said the old Greek, and he said wisely. Let it also be remembered, that this address is meant for *pastors*, and my remarks about *pastoral* preaching are not meant to touch the case of *evangelists*. Of course we all know that Whitefield, Moody, and other distinguished evangelists have been in the habit of preaching the same sermon over many times. When they find that some one particular scheme of thought and appeal has been greatly owned by the Spirit of God, such preachers are right to try it again and again; besides, without this saving of mental strength, they could hardly get through the physical toils of an evangelistic tour. Even in the case of evangelists, however, there is need for caution in the direction indicated. Whatever the department of our ministry, there is need to watch lest we use old work so as to impair our spiritual freshness, and so get changed into something like gospel machines. Allow me to commend to the attention of evangelists, these remarks of Mr. Ross Taylor about the late Brownlow North:—

"As was to be expected, the numbers of his addresses were limited, more especially as many had been published. But familiar though he must have been with these addresses, his public appearances were to the last preceded by hours of private prayer and meditation. On each occasion he was careful to enter thoroughly into the spirit of the subject selected, and to realize for himself the truths he proclaimed to others. His preaching was no case of reading off an old discourse from manuscript or from memory, but was the presentation of that with which his own soul had been in close and long contact."† My simple point is, that we must

* Δὶς ἢ τρὶς τα καλά.

† Moody Stewart's "Life of Brownlow North," p. 461.

avoid such ways of seeking help and saving trouble as will tend to lessen our living power.

How shall we older brethren most effectually influence the younger ones against the false ways of seeking help, that so threaten to emasculate the ministry? I fear that certain sentiments commonly held in the churches about the kind of preachers and workers wanted, tend to keep up the mischief. We have seen many a minister whose usefulness has been cut off in the bloom of its promise, and who has from the first sacrificed for life his preaching power, by using the minds of other men instead of using his own, because there was no other way of becoming all at once what is commonly called "a preacher"; and in the same way many a man has sacrificed his working power, used up all his time for study, and spent all the pith of his rich young life in going about to innumerable meetings, as the only way of becoming at once what is called "a worker." Such a man must often be shot through with thoughts that suddenly make his brain turn into darkness, and his heart melt into water. The telephone has not yet reached its perfection, and we may not yet overhear at a distance the words spoken in a prophet's chamber; but I think they are sometimes like these—"Here is Sunday morning come again, and I am not ready. What shall I do? Sink through the floor? Run! send a man round with a bell to say there will be no sermon to-day! Preach one of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons! Shout! But what shall I shout? 'O Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.'" Each one of us would like to come under that sufferer's burden, and say, "Lord, help me!"

We are not yet done with the consideration of difficulty needing help. If, from what has now been said, any minister resolves that he will never again seek help in his ministry by sham work, or slack work, or cheap work,

so as simply to save himself trouble, but that from this time he will serve the Lord with his whole real self, and consecrate to Him the best of his best, I think that he will find himself in danger of sin even in this direction, and that he will often need help from the Spirit of God to settle the question of conscience as to how far, and in what way, he is right in straining after excellence. It is right that he should be a full man; right that he should be a ready man; right, if he can, that he should know all about everything; right, if he can, that he should be a traveller in the kingdoms of language; right, if he can, that he should have at command words with great weight of blow, or glow of colour, that he should be able, as the Italians say, to "speak in relief" and with sovereign mastery. But this right is awfully near to a wrong. What if he should be tempted to trade with Divine truth, to take the name of God in vain, to become one of those to whom Jesus Christ says, "Woe unto you, actors!" and should use His gospel as an instrument for showing off himself. When we are about God's work, directly the desire to shine comes in, God goes out. There can be no Holy Ghost in that desire—there can be no blessing in it, for the Holy One could no more bless it than He can bless a sin, bless a vanity, bless a curse, or bless a blast from the pit. Lord, help me; I have no power to help myself. Fill me, fill me with the Holy Ghost, for there is no other way. Help me to give my all, and do my best while I say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me," and so, Lord, help me! I am sure that this prayer will not be in vain, for two reasons, with the short statement of which I shall close my testimony this morning.

One reason is, that the Lord *is related to me.* A distinguished scientific gentleman, who smiles at all faith in the supernatural, tells me that prayer is only an instinctive cry,

having in it no more divinity and no more significance than the bleat of a sheep. If I want a warrant for prayer, this is enough to begin with, for "the Lord is my Shepherd." I know it from a witness within, and from a Divine witness in this Book; therefore I will say to Him, "Lord, help me."

Another reason is, that *He has answered this cry before.* Each man of you can say, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him from all his fears." Many a time He did so last year. Many a time, when my feet were almost gone, and my steps had well-nigh slipped, He helped me just in time. A friend of mine was walking along a glassy shelf of a path, high up in a great white mountain, when his foot shot from under him; but a helper was at hand. "If I were to slip now," he asked the guide, "how far should I fall?" Said the man, "You would fall into Italy." Brother, high in spiritual standing, how far would you have gone if you had fallen last year? No mortal could sound the depth; but you kept looking to Jesus, and having obtained help, you continue to this day. If, besides the review of our personal life, we think of our Association, and look at the story of our London churches, we find it a wonderful story of help in answer to prayer. Our late patriarch, the Rev. Christopher Woollacott, who has just finished his course with joy, would have borne special witness to this grace. In a certain year of his early lifetime the Baptist churches of London and Southwark had a constituency of about 2,000 members. They now number 36,500. Then there were sixteen ministers, now there are 145; then there were no Sunday-scholars to report, now we report 50,000. Although statistics belong to the machinery of life rather than to life itself, and we would not therefore attach undue importance to numbers in our estimates of spiritual success, we must feel that these numbers mean

much; they tell of progress; they tell of prayer; they tell of help in answer to it; and inspire us as we stand by the "stone of help" raised this day, to cry as one man, "Because Thou hast been my refuge, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice." "Lord, help me!"

XV.

*STRENGTH FOR TIRED WORKERS.**

DR. JOHNSON once said, "Who is tired of London, is tired of life," and I am inclined to agree with the great didactic doctor. "Extremes meet," and I really do feel inclined to speak of this our mighty forest of humanity in the very terms lately applied to a great forest of tropical trees, and say, "it compels an interest sometimes mounting to keen, imperious, almost maddening excitement." Literary, scientific, social, and, most of all, Christian workers, such as we are, know that in no other centre can there be such a perpetual novelty of glorious work to do, or work that has such communications with the glorious work of all the world. Still it is impossible to walk in the street, or ride in a tram, or stand in a place like this, without seeing that most faces look tired; therefore, if you will allow me, I shall take for my thesis to-night—"Strength for Tired Workers."

First, I need scarcely say that all workers find this body a great inconvenience, constantly making them feel tired. A clergyman, crossing a field, saw an old man digging away in the stiff soil of his allotment, and said to him, "Well, friend, glad to see you enjoying your noble battle." Said the other, "Yes, your reverence, thank the Lord, I am fond of work; but, all the same, I am glad to be going to a world where work will not make my back ache." While

* At Hampstead, April 1st, 1879.

you have a back that is mortal, like that worker, though you are not tired *of* your field, you may be tired *in* it. It is not London that makes you tired; if you only had this body to live in, you would soon be tired to death in heaven. The body is yours, not you, not that which carries you, but that which you carry. The drop of tired eyelids on tired eyes, the tired nerves, the tired 450 voluntary muscles, and, altogether, the tired body, will make a tired soul. The greatest worker this world has ever seen felt all this. Paul seemed as if he had found out the secret of perpetual motion. Like the angel we read of, he carried the everlasting gospel through the lands, only, unlike him, he also had to carry a body about with him. It would have been easy to travel from meeting to meeting, and from service to service, through nation after nation, if it had not been for that; but eyes that had no light in them, lips that refused to utter the flaming words of his flaming soul, and trembling hands that had no strength to dash them down on paper with grand impatience, made him feel dreadfully tired. You suffer from the same complaint. Here is the true elixir of life for you; take it regularly; it has never been known to fail; its full effect will not come out until you have crossed the line of mystic change that we call Death. Meanwhile, even now your soul may drink fresh draughts of "the vigorous splendour of existence," and though your presence may be "weak," and "your speech contemptible," and you may have a body not worth speaking of, you may work wonders with it, for "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

Will you allow me to touch upon another point? A man said to me last week, "It is tiring work to be a saint in a London house of business." This remark was suggested by a remark of mine as to the frequency with which the word "saint" is used as a kind of denominational term in the

old documents of our people. They were always harping on the word "saint," and they loved to designate each other in their church correspondence as persons "called to be saints." Our calling is the same as theirs, but the word "saint" has got a little out of fashion, and some modern Christians, perhaps, hardly know what it means. When you use the word "saints," multitudes think directly of saints in the burning windows of the cool, dark church; saints veiled in laces of gold and silver sunshine; saints dressed in blue, green, and scarlet stained-glass glory; saints in glass goat-skins and sheep-skins, and whose pictures stream in bright mysterious tints over the brasses on the chancel floor; saints, who when on earth dwelt in some kind of holy Olympus, in ideal remoteness far beyond the actual realities of life; saints, like the saint who stood still so long in holy rapture, that a bird built its nest in his hair; saints, to be thought of only with a kind of mystic reverence, as beings of another calibre and class from ourselves, and to whom the title "saints" was given as a title indicating rank in a certain celestial house of lords and ladies; saints such as St. Giles, St. Denis, St. Vitus, St. Mary, but as Andrew Marvell has said, never St. Martha. All honour to these old immortals. Very likely God has spared kingdoms for the sake of some of them. It is not their fault that wicked stories have been told about their doings; but if all stories were true, they must often have got very tired in keeping up those wonders, on account of which they were placed in the calendar. It must have been tiring to stand on a pillar or to live in a cave for years and years; tiring to watch the rats like live shadows slip in and out of their holes in shadowy corners, until the watcher got nervous, and occasionally mistook a large rat for Satan himself; tiring (not to mention the risk of taking cold), tiring for any man to walk about with his head off; but such as these are not

the saints I mean. I now mean saints that I can understand, saints with tempers; dear, sinful, foolish saints; forgiven men and women who have to fret about their own blunders and to fight against their own sins; saints who speak the language of London; saints who must often run to catch the train, and who are sometimes too late for the post; and I say, however tiring it was to be a saint when the word meant something miraculous, it is far more tiring to the true and inner man to keep up the life of sainthood amidst the difficulties connected with the hard facts, commonplaces, and unpoetic surroundings of our city life—difficulties about the children, difficulties about money, difficulties in making both ends meet; tiring to be all alive to the vicissitudes of cotton and the palpitations of the Stock Exchange, and yet not be worldly; tiring to live in a worldly atmosphere, and yet not succumb to "the power of the air;" tiring to be ever surrounded by sharp detectives who are ever ready to say, "Your best robe is all sham and shoddy, not cloth of gold, but only cloth of dust;" it must be tiring to hold fast the integrity, to keep the heart fresh, and to make work a mode of worship. This is no child's play, no easy-going lapse of life. No dead fish can swim up the stream. No man can fight single-handed against a bad system in which he finds himself entangled, without sometimes fearing that his life will strain until it snaps. "I am not an infidel," says a man of business, who is certainly not a saint; "I'm a Christian, I am; I was born so, of course, and mean to stick to it, at least in a general way; but, so far as I can understand plain English, gospel and business —the business that you have to do to get on—do not go well together. I do not believe that there is any business in the City that can be carried out on what they call gospel principles, and not get into the *Gazette*." The Bishop of Rochester, speaking to Christians about the sins of society,

has just said, "Do something, do something, do something, and do it at once." Yes, but before we can *do* something, we must *be* something—that is, we must be saints—and what we do, very much depends on what we are. Of course you must be thoroughly Christian in yourselves, or what you do through this Association will fail of effect. You are getting tired; new strength is wanted without delay—how shall we get it? What is the name of that saint who saved sinking Peter, and who helped the dying thief into Paradise? Saint Jesus! and you need no prophet to tell you that. Strength is always to be had from Him for asking; but I venture to make an additional suggestion, and to say that you should ask for this strength just when and where it is wanted—that is, in the very time and place of business. You say, "Ministers know nothing about business." I know; but allow me still to press my prescription. A word of prayer, effectual to obtain the fresh and fresh strength wanted, would not take up a minute, and with my theories I should make such prayer matter of business no less than matter of worship, and should not put it off from what is called "business hours" to the "still hour." You pass the most of your Christian life in the sphere of business. When you have in that sphere a trial that makes it excessively difficult to think, feel, or speak "as becometh saints;" when you have a knot to disentangle, or what the psalmist called "a wall to leap over," why wait until you reach home before you pray for help? The trial is now, the knot is now, the wall is now, and the help must be now or never. Is the Hearer of prayer most desperately far away in that sphere where He is most wanted? or does prayer to Him seem to be less real because He is unseen? Why, all day long you act on the principle of praying to the unseen. You put your lips to a tube, and say to a man in the attic, "Bring down that last proof slip," and, although

the man is unseen, of course you expect an answer. You shudder at my home-spun parable; but is it more so than a certain parable in which prayer to God is likened to a man saying, "Friend, lend me three loaves"? I mean business. My point is this: there is an unseen Helper ever near, ever listening for you behind the veil of visibilities, and a whisper to Him from time to time, out from the cares that tire you so, would bring fresh strength to fainting souls.

Some are tired of speaking "out of season." So they ought to be. If by the phrase "out of season" is meant "inopportune;" if by "out of season" is meant forced and mechanical talk about holy things, and the habit of dragging into conversation, sanctities, without regard to proprieties —the proprieties of time, place, or circumstance—these persons ought to be tired of it. It is only a way of taking the name of God in vain. My reference, however, is to the apostolic words, "I charge thee . . . proclaim the word; be instant in season, out of season." Many a speaker would be instant at readiness to speak in season—that is, in the season of Sunday, in the season of the sermon, in the season of meeting at the Table, in the season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and in any season when he was expected to speak, and for which he has consequently prepared—who would find it hard work to speak out of such seasons? Yet it is by this "out of season" speech, following up the words spoken in the stated pastoral ministry, that "the word of God will grow mightily and prevail." During a certain period of great neuralgic excitement in connection with religion, when there was a great deal of spiritual electricity in the air, some of you found that to speak about Christ was only "letting yourselves go," and involved no difficulty whatever; but when the white heat had cooled off, it became hard conscientious effort, and such modes of Christian speech were "a weariness to the flesh." The

truth is, that to speak "out of season" about high spiritualities, and to speak naturally, you must be so full of the very life of your theme as to speak almost without knowing it. No matter what the season of the week or the season of the day, the flowers let their colours open and their odours fly, not because any one is looking, but because they are full of life; the birds pour out their merry music, not because any one is listening, but because they are full of life, and so you must be full of the life of the Spirit, if you would speak without weariness about the things of the Spirit, "in season, out of season."

You may also feel tired from difficulties in keeping up your numbers. We know that there is no sin in the multiplication table, and that arithmetic is not one of the black arts. We hope that, although it is not in the catechism, it is not wicked to furnish numerical returns for annual publication. I will not now enter into an argument as to the right or the wrong of this report, but I will venture so far as to say that "what must be, must be;" and also to say that if this must be, we should try to report our numbers with Christian accuracy. Some persons are loose in such reports, simply out of most heroic notions about numbers. There was once a great revivalist meeting in the neighbourhood of Carnarvon. De Quincy, who had lodgings there, questioned his landlady as to the probable numerical amount of the assemblage, when "she was not exactly sure, but she should say that perhaps there might have been a matter of four millions." Sometimes, in making out the tables of success, London human nature may be apt to err in the direction taken by that poor Welsh human nature. On the other hand, some of us feel this report of numbers to be a chronic worry. Since it is requested, we are anxious to give fair information, but shudder at our own statement. We live in such a rapidly circulating population, and such

changes—changes of service, changes of residence, changes of name through marriage—are constantly taking place in our congregations, without being reported to the "census takers," that we are "a-weary, a-weary," in our efforts to be true. The accounts will not come right. All we can do is to make this question more than ever a question of prayer and of Christian ethics, and, at the same time, while the word is faithfully proclaimed, and the gospel consistently lived, to take comfort from knowing that if in one church the numbers go down, it is because in another they go up. Faithful servants of Christ, your usefulness is not going down, Christ's cause is not going down. I say, let but our members all be saints, and burn the statistics! My choice is that of Whitefield: "I would rather have a church with ten men in it, right with God, than a church with five hundred in it at whom the world laughs in its sleeve."

Some of you are tired by the slowness of success. The population of London grows, they tell us, at the rate of 50,000 a year; and what is the rate at which the Christian churches grow? Patience, brothers mine; it is God's work, not ours. I believe in the personal reign of Christ now. He reigns in us who have the eternal life in us—that eternal life is Christ in us, the hope of glory. Though we see not yet all things put under Him, He must reign until He has put all things under His feet. In 1804, Napoleon struck a medal with this inscription—"London taken." It is foolish for the world to announce its victories beforehand, but we are not foolish to say that Christ is conqueror of London already, although we see not yet all things put under Him. Work on, Christian workers, Christ working in you, and, sure as the Bible, a day will come when all the spiritual Israel, though perhaps still marching after the banners of the various tribes, shall hear the order—"Shout! for the Lord hath given us the city."

XVI.

*THE ZENANA MISSION.**

IN trying to say something that may stir you up to give fresh helpto the ladies in their zenana † work, my first argument is that *this is a work which they only can do.* We have all heard a great many statements—tabular and tea-tabular, furious, philosophic, and declamatory, as to the distinction between man's work and woman's work, and the difference between what man can do and what woman can do. I am not yet able to make it out quite mathematically, but this morning I have been reading in the Acts of the Apostles about Peter and Dorcas, and taking this as a representative case, my conclusion is that Dorcas could do some things that Peter could not have done to save his life. Cardinal Manning has spoken with stately eloquence about the primacy of Peter, but I think something might be said for the primacy of Dorcas. Peter was all very well for a man (of course I now leave out the mysterious element of the supernatural); he was "a rich, rough gem;" he had good sound sense; he was hardy, not fearing to let the wet wind whistle through his hair; he was loud, that superlative quality in a minister; and with a voice

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* Delivered at Missionary Breakfast, Cannon Street Hotel, May 1st, 1879.

† Of course it will be understood that in India, the word zenana marks that part of the house in which only the ladies live.

accustomed to battle with the hiss and roar of many waters, he was the very man to make everybody hear him in a great crowd,—that voice of his being doubtless one reason, along with others, why Infinite wisdom appointed him to be the preacher to the Pentecostal crowd. With all his distinctions, if he had tried to fill the place of Dorcas for only one week, he would have been made to feel his own nothingness. He was no shy violet, hiding in the foliage, and pouring its fragrance from the shade. A sick room would not have been his sphere. His hand would have been too clumsy, his voice too noisy, and his foot too tremendous on the stair for a nurse, and he would have provoked a saint to say, if a saint had been familiar with the quotation, "a ministering angel—thou!" Could you have seen him with fumbling fingers and with eyes sweeping the horizon, essay to cut out coats and garments, you would have seen directly that whatever else he might become, he would never become a sempstress. No, but the lady of Joppa knew how to make the very needle evangelical, and she did such beautiful kindnesses with it for the women and children, that with grateful delight they fondly lingered on her name, calling her "Gazelle." For her dear sake her Saviour got a hearing, and we are quite sure that if there had been any zenana work to do in her country, she would have been the first to do it.

As to the question, "which is most important, man or woman?" if I may be allowed to speak in editorial style, I should say, "the discussion must now stop." Let those who like it "sit apart upon a hill retired" and discuss the kindred questions "which is the most important, convex or concave, night or morning, east or west, green land or glancing water?" For ourselves, we are, I hope, content to take Florence Nightingale's advice—"Keep clear of all jargons about man's work and woman's work, and go your

way straight to God's work in simplicity and singleness of heart," each one to do what each one can do best. Now, we know that, as a rule, some things that women can do right nobly at a crisis are not best for them to do when men are to be had. As a rule, I think it is not best for women to man a lifeboat; but we have been told that one black night at Teignmouth last year, when the men were all out of the way, or else were not sharp enough, the women got the lifeboat out. With shrill, quivering cheers they carried it through the battling breakers, dragged a vessel off the sand-bar, and saved precious life. When we hear that they did all this without any help from the unfair sex, who can help saying, "Well done"? I go farther, and say that, as a rule, in my private opinion, it is not best for women to preach in public, but where in exceptional cases, and with extraordinary gifts, women like Mary Fletcher and Priscilla Gurney go out of their way, and all by themselves publicly launch the lifeboat of the gospel to snatch souls from the sea of sin and from the rocks of death, again I say, to the praise of grace, Well done! They remind me of the Roman who said, "I have broken the law, but I have saved the State." They are under a higher law than the law they violate, and I am no more able to doubt the validity of their orders than I can doubt the sanity of the New Testament. Of course the loving common sense of Christianity will spare our ladies as far as possible all public work, all loud work, all rough-and-ready work, and will be quick to recognize it as best that their gospel preaching should specially be on the principle of woman to woman. This is the principle of the Zenana Mission. But if men were qualified to take part in this work, they are not permitted. Peter is out of the question; only Dorcas will do. If all the twelve Apostles were on earth again, and wished to enter the zenana, they might wish as long as they pleased, the answer to their

application would be "no admittance;" but Providence, pointing to the sanctum so long shut and guarded, says to the Christian women of England, "Behold, I have set before you an open door."

Clear as day, another argument for the zenana work is *its singular importance.* This it is scarcely possible to exaggerate, for there is now no other way of introducing the blessings of Christianity to the women of India. A clergyman of the old school, preaching about the sphere of woman, took for his text the question and answer, "Where is thy wife? Behold, she is in the tent." "There she ought to be," said he, "and the less she is heard outside, the better." So he lifted his testimony, and "nailed it with Scripture." A conservative Hindoo, and more especially a Mahomedan, would have admired that discourse; for, behold, *his* wife is in the tent with a vengeance, or in the zenana, which is far worse. Talk to him about woman's rights! you might as well talk to a hippopotamus. In fact, as James Smith, of Delhi, has said, "not woman's rights but woman's wrongs claim first attention in India." It is an intolerable wrong that she should be shut up for life in a zenana, with no education, on the theory that she has no mind to be educated. Faculties are apt to perish from disuse; even the sharpest eyes grow blind if left long enough in darkness; so, there being nothing for the mind to do, the zenana mind dies down. Of course the trial is almost maddening to those who have any mental life left. The *Times* correspondent, making note of this mission a little while ago, reported that "a young married lady in one of the zenanas said to the lady who visited her, 'This sort of life is like frogs in a well—all around life and beauty, and we buried.'" The zenana may be a loquacious place—I dare say it is—but they have nothing but nothings to talk about. It may sometimes be a gay place, but the

gaiety plays like a will-o'-the-wisp over stagnation. It may be a place of physical ease, but it is interest, not ease, that makes life life; and there is nothing to inspire interest, there can be nothing to make a centre, nothing to fix a point of rest, nothing answering to home. True, it may be so even in England sometimes. "Home, sweet home!" is not always the song of a mother's heart. "Home!" says the lady to the man at the carriage door, when sometimes the word has a sarcastic sound, and seems to crash through her soul like a saw. When, however, an Englishwoman's house is not her home, it is through some fault of married life; but the women of India have no true home, entirely through fault in the organic framework, or at least in the fixed habit of native society. It is impossible to look at these things with holy indifference. We feel an emotional hurry and a divine impatience to reach the prisoners of the zenana, first for their own sakes, poor souls! but also because, until they are reached, the Word of the Lord cannot be glorified in India. Should we expect it to be glorified in England, if the ministers only had men in their congregations, and we had no agency for reaching the women and children, except in the very lowest social stratum? This has ever been the case over there. Talk about the wonder that after eighty or ninety years' missionary labour in India only so many thousand natives have made a profession of faith in Christ, the real wonder is that it has made any way whatever. The regeneration of a community must begin with the mothers; you must touch the next generation through the mothers. One of the English unbelievers of the last century declared that he had begun to be an unbeliever before he was five years old! In India, as well as in England, you may pitch life to a right or wrong key before life has left the nursery. Then mind the mothers. Once inside the zenana, I think the gospel has facilities

which it has nowhere else in India. Pioneers of the Cross, working amidst the old, grand, but arrested and petrified civilizations, have to clear their way through much subtle and evasive disputation before they can get at the real work they come for, and they are therefore comparatively slow in making impressions on the men; but I should think that the women, not having been under the same special and false education, are more easily led to the point at once, and that where they are taught by the Holy Spirit, they are more sensitive by their very trials to the simple charm of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is the joy of their visitors to teach them, not in the first instance about a system, wondrous as our gospel system is, but about a Person. The Sun, the Star, the Vine, the Rock, the Foundation, are the different names of a Person. The Way of Salvation is a Person. "Which is the way out?" was once the cry of two little children. They had been playing by the sea, and before they were aware, the tide had come up, and the racing waves were beyond this peak and that peak of the crescent of rock that walled them in; but just then a horseman came splashing round one of the peaks, right up to them. "Which is the way out?" they cried. He caught them up to the saddle, and said, "I am the way," and so carried them off through a sea of death to their own happy home. Is it irreverence to be reminded by this of Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life"? And can we help feeling glad that we can tell the women and the children of India about "heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan" of salvation through trust in a Friend? Who will take part in this work? Is the cost of the mission a difficulty? The French people find no difficulty in collecting £18,000 annually for supporting a society which only aims to secure the baptism of heathen children *in articulo mortis*, and shall we find a difficulty in generously supporting efforts to make

the mothers of India know the gospel, so that they may bring their children to Jesus, that He may put His hands upon them? If there is any Christian young lady here, a lady in every sense of the word, who is sighing "My life, and what shall I do with it?" let her lay the subject of the zenana before her Counsellor, and say, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" "Who then is willing to consecrate her service this day unto the Lord?" Who will now "come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty"? Help the Lord? you may be ready to say. Preposterous! How can I help the Lord? Help the sun to shine, help the wind to blow, help the tender tremble of the dawn to burn on and conquer the power of darkness; help the spring to awaken the charmed atoms and the sleeping colours of field and forest into life and kindling beauty; help the tidal wave to travel up in gathering might, and to stamp in trampling thunder on the shore! Can we? Yes, more easily than we can help the Lord to save souls. For all that, I will not call back the phrase, for it is God's own phrase. It was He who brought the charge against Meroz, "Ye came not up to the help of the Lord." There is a sense in which we are called upon to do this thing, and in which He waits for us, allowing His work to stop until we are ready. This is no order of sovereignty without a reason. One plain reason for it, at any rate, is the benefit thus given to His people. He could do without us in this matter, but for our sakes He will not. He graciously permits us to work as the instruments of His Almighty Spirit, though He graciously calls that work help. There is no mystery in it. Love can see through it all. You do the like in your own little world. There is a little daughter helping her mother to comfort the sick poor. There is a little son helping his father to drive, or helping him to build a house, or helping him to dig a garden, or helping him to write a book, by

handing him a fresh pen from time to time. It is in fact a part of education—not the child helping the father, but the father helping the child. So if you, who have any money, or any influence, or any life to give away, help the Lord to bless the poor women of India; by so doing, the Lord will help you.

XVII.

*THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON'S SILVER WEDDING.**

YOU have asked me to take for the subject of this address—"The Baptists Twenty-five Years ago, and Now." After the grip and the glow of words about your own particular home, and the stings of delight with which you must have heard your own particular story, all that I have to say about the story of the other Baptist churches during the same period of twenty-five years will naturally sound like tame talk about things in general. Yet, if you can, hear me. Hear me first speak for a moment or two about that much-caluminated word "Baptist," into which it is thought by some that the soul of our denomination is cramped and shut up like a lovely plant in a tight pot. The gentlemen who think so have not the pleasure of knowing us. Cut with knife or nail in the wall of the old prison chamber at Lambeth Palace, unknown centuries ago, I find in Latin this inscription—"Jesus is my Love," re-

* At this meeting (May 20, 1879) the sum of £6,233 was presented to the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, gratefully to mark the completion of twenty-five years of his pastorate. Of this amount, he gave out his intention to hand over £500 towards the endowment of the almshouses connected with the Tabernacle; and to spend the rest in other Christian services then specified. More than six thousand persons must have been present. Two addresses were delivered on the occasion, one was by Mr. B. W. Carr, a deacon of the church, giving a sketch of its history during Mr. Spurgeon's time, and the other was the following.

minding me of the sentence ascribed to Ignatius—"My Love is crucified." What confessor wrote these words upon the wall? Perhaps he was a Baptist Lollard, perhaps a seminary priest; but no man can infer what his denomination was from the fact of his loyalty to Jesus. This I know, Baptist or no Baptist, sure as he had this loyalty, and sure as I have, I belong to that man, and that man belongs to me, "world without end, amen." But as of old, "a man of Benjamin, a mighty man of valour," did not the less belong to his own little tribe because he belonged to the commonwealth of Israel; so now, a man need not be the less a Baptist because he glories in the essential oneness of himself with all believers. "Your distinctive tenet," say some, "is a little thing to make the standard of a tribe." We repudiate that imputation of littleness. If we are wrong in our reading of what Christ commands as the initial act of our Christian profession, the meaning of that act is not little, the consequences of it are not little, and the principle of obedience is not little; we therefore say to our courteous critics, one and all, "We naturally want to know how our own tribe gets on in the world, for it would be bad for us, bad for you, and bad for all the world, if Baptists were to go down." In glancing at the history of the last twenty-five years, first, I have to report *some* of our encouragements as a denomination.

One of these encouragements is *numerical increase.* Leaving for the present all measurement of our progress with the ratio of progress in the national population—not even daring to look at the grand field of our foreign mission, nor indeed at any of our mission fields; not appropriating the countless casuals and ecclesiastical irregulars who hold our baptismal tenet, but who are not to be found in our congregations; and simply drawing information from our institutional books and papers—allow me to offer, for what

they are worth, these few comparative sum totals :—Twenty-five years ago the church members in our union were reported as about 85,245; to-day they number about 276,348. Twenty-five years ago the children in our Sunday-schools were 106,711; to-day they are 399,317. Then the teachers were 14,600; now they are 40,216. Then, as to the numbers of our London churches, there was no numerical report; now they they are reported as 36,095. Then, as to chapel building, no particulars were known, and so little were we interested in this department of edification, that no particulars were collected before 1864; but Mr. Alfred Bowser, who is our final authority in such matters, has favoured me with a tabulated statement, which shows that in the last thirteen years, in England alone, not including Ireland, Scotland, Wales, or the county of Monmouth, we have expended £1,026,099 on the erection of chapels, thus providing an increase of about 170,000 sittings. Gentlemen, I can understand a little about material values, but not much; I know the cost of building—when I am told; I can hear Mr. Booth say that we now have sittings for 1,028,833 persons, and should be glad to find that this estimate is too small by half; but spiritual statistics I do not understand. I reverence the seers who write our annual book of numbers, but for myself I never knew how to tabulate the consequences even of one single successful throw of a gospel net cast by any man, so as, like the old Galilean, to set down in my book the number of fishes caught, for instance, "there —exactly one hundred and fifty and three—*three*, not quite four." I am no actuary, quick at working sums in gospel arithmetic; indeed, I think that such sums generally defy the multiplication table, and confound analysis; no calculating machine, no ready reckoner can help us much in counting conversions; and it seems to me that if the mystic man seen in the prophet's vision, "clothed in linen, and

with a writer's ink-horn at his side," were to appear to us, offering to mark and tell up God's people for us, even then we should not understand what he would have to say about spiritual numbers and their value. So, if I felt sure as to the numerical accuracy of our figures to-night, I should not be sure of their true meaning. What do you mean by 276,348 sinners who repent? What do you mean by *one?* As Latimer said, "I hear a pen scratching behind the arras." It is the Lord who is even now writing up His people, but we shall not know the true census until the day when, having finished it, He shall read it out. With all these reserves, however, and all these qualifications, I do think that the rough numerical statement now given is an index of great value, furnishing proof of progress that we should joyfully recognise, and for which we should give God all the glory.

I also venture to say that we have encouragement in *the spiritual life* of our churches compared with what it was twenty-five years ago. Although we have nothing to be proud of, and much to be sorry for, the Holy Spirit, whom we have so ofter grieved, is working within us "to will and to do of His good pleasure." By that grace we have more mutual knowledge, more cohesive force, more active kindness in the churches of our union. I think also that Baptists better understand the essential catholicity of their distinctive principle—the principle that always puts faith *first*, and that makes union with Christ everything, so that we are only consistent with ourselves when we are "broad as the charity of Almighty God, yet narrow as His righteousness."

Going from branch to root, I hasten to mark a third encouragement to thank God for and congratulate ourselves upon, and that is *a growing love to the old gospel.* Let us be clear about what we mean by the old gospel, for this I am glad to hope is the live and burning question of the

day. Some say the gospel is *infinite;* we say the gospel is only a *direction* to what is infinite. A direction that in itself is infinite is practically no direction at all. When it is late, and I want to know the way to a place, I am not satisfied with an infinite direction. When I am ill, and want to know how to get well, I am not satisfied with an infinite direction. So, if I am lost, and want to know this very minute, while I am slipping off the cliff of life, what I must do to be saved, I am not satisfied with an infinite direction.

The gospel, however, is essentially directive, telling us all first what we need to know that we may *be* saved, next what we need to know when we *are* saved; speaking, not in melodious generalities, but in round and royal notes, or "writing the vision on tables," that he who runs may read. "We have been told that the gospel is an infinite truth." I allow that this saying swells with a grand sound, and that the idea conveyed, when you come to think, has that "Obscurity" in it which, Dr. Blair remarks, "is not unfavourable to the Sublime." Still, for myself, I speak of the gospel as *definite*—a definite direction to infinite truth, infinite purity, infinite charity, infinite heaven, infinite illumination—all these infinities being gradually and eternally found in the infinite Jesus!

The theory as to the gospel being infinite, rather than definite, naturally leads to a fashion of language that is not definite—language which the late Archbishop Whately compared to light in a London fog; light that is sometimes resplendent with gay prismatic colours, but which fails to show things definitely; light that is just sufficient to tempt men to keep at their business, though not enough to save them from running against a lamp-post or stumbling down a cellar. There may be a few, even of our own people, who think that love of this kind of light implies intellectual super-eminence, and who dream that to be indefinite is to

be broad. "You ought to be broad," say they. "Yes, indeed," say we; but we are now speaking of the gospel *road*, and that is not what the New Testament calls the "broad road." The question is, not whether we have a broad or a narrow road, but whether we have one that answers the purpose. "I would rather have a bridge narrow as Hungerford, that goes right across the river, than one broad as Westminster, that stops in the middle." We love the broad land of wealth unknown, but we have no love of indefiniteness in the language of direction to it; we want more than the misty message "that Christ did something or other, which somehow or other had some connection or other with salvation;" for though we are many-sided, and have many sympathies, we are no "children of the mist," and have no sympathy with fog. "Ah," said Neander, "there is a future for you Baptists!" This was also the language of the late Dr. Krummacher to my friend, Dr. Steane. I should be sorry to think so in any influential sense, apart from our fidelity to God's definite revelation of a Saviour. Indeed, I could not think so; for then the glory of the Lord would depart from our camp; but we believe that, as a rule, our pastors have a growing wish to teach, and our people to learn the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of the gospel as a recorded revelation, the gospel fixed in its first meaning, and unchanged as the laws of the lens or the triangle.

From reporting some of the encouragements, let me go on to speak about some of the *instruments* by which they have been brought about. Meeting in this place, and in present circumstances, you know what instrument I shall naturally mention first. Twenty-five years ago there came up to London a young Levite, whose advent was a revolution. I name no names. The youth I mean was not quite according to pattern, and while he was "determined to

know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," he said and did bold things with such racy tokens of strong individuality, and with a smile of such cheerful, cool, refreshing frankness, to say the least of it, that some of the excellent of the earth looked at him over their spectacles with wise and wary glance, felt a catch in their breath, and were nervous, not so much at what he *had* said as at what he was *going* to say. Some thought he would flare up and go out; and further on, when growing crowds assembled, and growing nobilities of work were done, some were ready to say, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." There was but one opinion as to the fact of power: there were many as to the secret of it. As, when the question was asked of Samson—"Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth"—some persons rather thought that the strength lay in the hair, so some scientists suggested totally inadequate explanations of the strength now in question. Doubtless there were secondary causes not far to seek. It is a great thing to have a great heart. It is a great thing, and a rare, for a man to be a man. Few persons walk on stilts, but many talk on stilts, and it is a great thing to be perfectly natural. It is a great thing for a preacher to have a preaching nature; so that he can say what he likes, when he likes, and can command the happy word that strikes straight out and hits the white. It is a great thing to show no white feather, and never to run away from a lie; it is a great thing to have no secret like a lie in the life; it is a great thing to have no nerves, and to have no doubts; for whatever doubts may be good for, they are not good to preach. It is a great thing to be gifted with a voice that can flow out with tranquil power, and fill with ease a place like this, giving in clear sound clear sense; so that the busy, weary men of London may catch all the music and

all the meaning in a moment, without a puzzle. It is a great thing, in writing or speaking English, to have "the unerring first touch" that marks the artist. These are great things, and these natural causes must have corresponding natural effects; but the natural can never produce the supernatural. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." The Holy, Sovereign Spirit alone has wrought the continuous wonder that has been witnessed here, glorifying Christ by blessing the word of Christ's servant. Through that blessing alone we have seen this place gradually become a centre of gracious activities and a vast apparatus of help to souls; so, to speak in scientific fashion, this Tabernacle has been a kind of germ-cell out of which other tabernacles have had development, and from this church hundreds of other churches have had formation. Here is a preaching station with no end to its radius. On Sunday morning, when the minister stands on this spot, he not only speaks to row beyond row within its walls, but his voice travels on till it strikes Australia. When we take into account the audience in this place, along with the 25,000 copies of each morning sermon printed on an average in England only, and the number of readers each copy has, it would be a moderate thing to say that Mr. Spurgeon preaches every week to a congregation of one hundred thousand. If, within the few minutes allotted me, I were to attempt to give a fair statement of things that show the influence of Mr. Spurgeon on our denominational growth, my statement would only daze and stun you with astounding facts, rather than secure a clear appreciation of their value. In offering to you the mere statistics of services, it would be necessary to speak volumes. One volume would be wanted to show his manifold influence on the churches through the press; another would be wanted to trace it as conveyed through the many societies and institutions of the Taber-

nacle; another would be wanted to follow out the workings of the Pastor's College. From this college 416 brethren have entered this ministry as recognised pastors of churches or missionaries. Of these missionaries, fifteen are in Australia or New Zealand; four in China; one is in Japan; two are in India, and another is just going; two are in the West Indies; one is at St. Helena; five are in Africa; one is in Brazil; one at Naples; two are in Spain; nineteen of the young men are now ministers in the United States; eight are in Canada; two are in Nova Scotia; and several ladies from the Tabernacle church are engaged in zenana or kindred work in the East Indies. Reserving reports from foreign work, and still confining our references to home, allow me just to notify that 102 new churches have been founded by the students, 118 new chapels have been built or bought, much has been expended on chapel enlargements or improvements, on paying off old debts, on building new schools and manses. The secretary has just said to me, "On a very moderate estimate indeed, not including the cost of this Tabernacle, and keeping much below the actual facts, I should put down the sum laid out in buildings at £300,000." As far as figures can show the most recent facts of spiritual success, they are as follow:—In the returns made in 1878 by 292 pastors only, the others not sending returns, some from diffidence, some from not understanding the request, 35,444 baptisms were reported, with a net increase of 3,124 in 292 churches. The total baptisms from 1868 to 1878 were 36,123; net increase, 33,282; and at the present time the churches presided over by ministers sent out from the Pastor's College have a total memberbership of 39,308.

Think of the work and responsibility which all these facts imply being carried on by Mr. Spurgeon through the intense history of twenty-five years; of his being through

all that period the life of such an executive as yours, diffusing his presence through the complex machinery that has its centre here. It is more than man was made for, or than flesh and blood can bear. It would be enough to make an Atlas faint. In such a case, even the joy of success is a fearful joy. Living at such high pressure, and in the midst of such eternal publicity, if there are times when his soul is struck through with the spirit of jubilee, there must also be times when to his excited fancy the powers of earth and hell are striving against him in one black fraternisation, times of terrible tension, times of passionate silence, times of power only to cry, "Alone, alone!" No wonder that he has your love. Under God, that love has had a great deal to do with making him the man he is, as Jonathan's love had a great deal to do with making David the man he was. It is a mean mischief to warn congregations, as some sages do, against making idols of their ministers. I never knew a church show a true pastor too much true love. Depend upon it, he needs it all. Pray for each discouraged minister, that he may not fail in any agony-point; pray for a man still more when his life looks like one long success. Homely people say of such a man, they fear that so much praise will "turn his head." Even those who have had greatest power from God have, before now, been proud of it, and that pride has gone before a fall. The Hebrew giant who was called by John Milton "that mighty Nazarite"—the story of whose life serves as a parable—who, while the Spirit of God wrought mightily in him, could do anything; he on whom once, like a black flash, a lion sprang from the thicket; he who then grasped the monster's jaws with his iron hands, and with a twist and a snap rent him in twain, and flung the dead thing back into the thicket again; he who once dashed up the gates of Gaza from their sockets, swung them over his

shoulder, and bounded up the hill—even he fell, and became an abject weakling, tempting the heathen to think that after all his God was dead. But, thanks to the sovereign grace of the Great Unspeakable, our brother has been upheld till now, and after a pause of helplessness we see him stand with us on this red-letter day, once more renewed in his spirit's youth and his body's energy, to join in the solemn shout of the churches and to say, "O Thou Preserver of men, the living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as we do this day."

The subject is too large for an address, and I must now wind up in a hurry, without the possibility of doing justice to my own meaning, or of making out a complete statement of my argument, so as to glorify my God as I wish to do. We ought to remember other instruments used by the Great Worker, besides that one which we have reasonably dwelt upon with particular emphasis on this particular occasion. I can only indicate some of them, without attempt at enlargement. We ought to remember the instrumentality of Sunday-schools. In saying this, I would, if possible, speak in capitals. We ought to remember the revival of our own denominational enterprise in London that commenced four years before the date of which we have been thinking, and which was first marked by the erection of Bloomsbury Chapel. In such an enterprise the first steps are the great steps. I do not mean to forget Sir Morton Peto, and I shall appropriate for him the saying, "A man was famous according as he lifted up axes on the thick trees." We ought to remember the men who were our leaders just before the period we now trace began. Look at the names of London ministers alone for the year 1854, and you see Hinton, Steane, Stovel, Aldis, Green, Baptist Noel, Brock, Katterns, John Stevens, and a "cloud of witnesses" besides. These ministers, some of whom are

still spared to us, though most of them are now numbered with the old nobility of heaven, were all men of strong conviction, pronounced theology, and holy life, whose labours, be sure, were "not in vain in the Lord," and who were all great educators of evangelists. We ought to remember the secret prayers and hidden lives of Christians who lived long ago. It is God's will to give us great spiritual blessings through human instruments, but it is not His will that we should always be able to identify those instruments. There may be at this very moment a grand work going on ten thousand miles away, that was once set going by something in the life of your William Lepard or Father Olney; they never dreaming of such a thing. No mortal can trace the lineage or genealogy of a spiritual success. For instance, before the world is out, it may be found that whole nations of spirits have received more good than tongue can tell through John Bunyan's instrumentality, but to whose instrumentality do we owe John Bunyan? We must, I think, trace much of it to the "three or four godly women, sitting at a door in the sun," whose joyful conversation about the things of God he overheard, and of whom he says, "They were to me as if I had found a new world, as if they were a new people that dwelt alone, and were not reckoned among their neighbours." Before now, you have been astonished by reports of success "crowning the labours" of a man who in faith, in self-denial, in spiritual scholarship, and in all the things that go to make ministerial fitness, is only one in the great multitude of the unremarkable. Yet he tells you of "his conversions," and you read in the papers from time to time that "he is doing a great work!" Is he? For my own part, I am inclined to think that he is only reaping what was sown by some weeping prophet who lived in former times, and whose name will be a secret until "the day shall

declare it." Cardinal Newman said last week, "Most men, if they do any good, die without knowing it," and I think that the truth certainly tends in this direction. Many of the encouragements that we have been thanking God for may be the outcome and the flower of life that passed away a hundred years ago—the life of persons whose fame, when they were here, never spread more than a thousand square yards, of persons who are gone without ever having left their initials, of persons who are unknown as the anonymous angel of Gethsemane. Perhaps some of these encouragements may be given in answer to the prayer and in blessing on the life of some person whose last days were spent in some houses like that which your love would endow to-day. The very first woman in all history named as speaking about "the redemption" was an old lady who lived in a retreat; and you may find all about it in the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. It would be only like the Saviour to bless the lives of His hidden ones in making them instruments of cheering His churches; and who knows how much of the splendid public blessing for which to-day we thank Him may be the result of prayer offered from the shade, and of lives sacred to humility? We ought, after all, to remember that our best instruments are instruments only. Who, then, is Mr. Spurgeon, and who are these instruments, "but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man"? We must not boast, even if we are prosperous, lest God arrest our prosperity in the hour of our pride. The sword must not boast, the trowel must not boast; to borrow Philip Henry's words, "All our songs must be sung to this humble tune, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be all the glory.'" Robert Hall has said, "It is one thing to stop, another to finish." Now I must stop, you must finish, you and your children and your children's children—you, yet not you,

but Christ living in you. You, members of a small battalion in God's great army, join with all the soldiers of the cross of every name, and begin a new "fight of faith" to-day! We have had encouragements, but is there nothing to be said on the other side? We speak of increase, but does it correspond with the increase of the general population? and is the church gaining ground on the world? We rejoice to have many new places of worship, and to know that many of them are filled, but how many "houses of Baal are filled from end to end"? We report more ministers, but how many ministers and missionaries of sin are in the world! Three hundred years ago a minister said to his congregation, "Shall I tell you who is the diligentest bishop in all England? It is the devil." Has that bishop less to do now? Is it true that the wealth of the country, contrasted with twenty-five years ago, has increased fourfold, while, speaking generally, our missionary offerings during the same period have increased onefold only? It is true that in the course of the last twenty-five years the amount annually expended on intoxicating drinks has increased from thirty to over one hundred and forty-seven millions sterling! If these things are true, then what has been done is only a beginning. Let the joy of the Lord be your strength for fresh endeavours. Cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart; live the life that is eternal; not in lip-language mainly, but in all the languages you know, preach the great salvation. If you are Christians, never keep your Christianity a secret, but out with it; never go back, never say die! "Do good," as says Jeremy Taylor, "then do it again." In the name of the Lord, in the power of the Spirit, in the highest sense of the word, "heal the sick, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give."

XVIII.

*WHAT A PASTOR THINKS A PASTOR SHOULD BE.**

IF I might give a title to this address of mine, I should call it "What a Pastor thinks a Pastor should be." Gentlemen, let us have a clear understanding from the commencement, as to what I mean by a pastor, and of what I think is the distinction between a pastor and an evangelist. More or less, in one way or in another, every Christian is called and qualified to be an evangelist, but every Christian is not called and qualified to be a pastor. While, flaming with a passion for the salvation of souls, he does the work of an evangelist, *that* is, preaches to lost men the tidings of salvation, the pastor also does his own perfectly distinct and additional work, *that* is, he devotes himself to the function of rousing, teaching, and guiding those who are already saved, and who on that ground are members of a church. Now, without attempting to preach what would usually pass for a sermon, I shall found what I have to say on a text—the text that tells us in condensation what Paul thought a pastor should be—the text in 2 Tim. ii. 15, "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed." According to this oracle, a minister must

First, be a *man*.

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* Address to the students of Regent's Park, Bristol, and Chilwell Theological Colleges.

Secondly, he must be a *work*man.

Thirdly, he must, as to his manliness and as to his work, have *no reason to be ashamed of himself.*

I. Pause a little at the first thought. In making a minister, the first thing wanted is a *man.* There must be a *man* before there can be a *work*man. You may feel inclined to say to me, "Well, if that be all that you must have to begin with, there will be no need to wait long for it: a man is no such great rarity; going up and down in the streets of London to-day, you might have seen thousands. A prophet might have questioned this; for we know that once a prophet cried, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a *man.*"

By a man, I now mean a person who in the first place has in him all those natural attributes that we naturally look for in manhood. I would include in these, as far as possible, the physical force and healthy development that we are accustomed to call manly. Although Infinite mercy will not refuse "the torn, and the lame, and the sick" for sacrifice, when the offerer has nothing better to present; a modern minister, whose life answers to this picture, is ill fitted to stand the friction of his work, and the strain of his warfare. I should like to say to students, Gentlemen, reverence the body, and see to it in time, that by no creation of artificial necessities, by no violent forcing processes, by no extremes in your habits of life, by no fault of your own, it should ever become less fit than it now is to work as the servant of the soul.

A cable, though too short by half a mile to reach the deep sea floor, may be good *as far as it goes.* This is all we can say for physical distinctions, however splendid,—they are good as far as they go, but they will not go far towards fulfilling the ideal of even natural manliness.

Various expressions in the Apostolic Scriptures help us to reach the full meaning of the word "man." When Paul says to the Corinthians, "In malice be ye children, in understanding, men;" when speaking to them of himself, he says that "soon as he became a man, he put away childish things;" when, after telling them that Apollos would not, that he could not, and that Timothy might not, visit them, he adds, "Quit you like men," meaning, unaided by our presence, thrown upon your own resources, let each play the man,—we learn that by "a man" he means one who has naturally a clear spirit, sound sense, tranquil power and courage, and who, without the aid of maternal care or sheltering tenderness, may be trusted out alone. Everything is not a man that passes for one. A man is no made-up article, no human machine, no mere result of money, drill, or decoration.

> "You may boast of jewels, coronets—
> Ermine, purple—all you can;
> There is that *within* them nobler,
> Something that we call a man!
> Something all the rest surpassing,
> As the flower is to the sod,
> As to man is high archangel,
> As is to archangel—God!"

That is, the surpassing difference between the value of a man, and that of the most glorious material accidents of his life, is *infinite.* Nothing of lower value than manhood can serve the purpose we speak of and plead for. You might make a priest out of almost anything, but a minister can only be made out of a *man.*

Directly counter to this conviction, an opinion still obscurely floats in many minds, that almost anything is good enough to be made into a minister. Only a man is fit to be a soldier, only a man can be a match for man in

the competitions of trade; only a man can fight his way up to the high stations of professional success; but the Christian ministry is the suitable sphere of a person who is likely to fail in any other sphere! It has even been thought a sign of grace to hold this creed. Not only have good men believed, as we all believe, that God is glorified by using earthen vessels, but they have believed that He is most glorified when, by our own selection, the said earthen vessels are the poorest in ware, meanest in pattern, and most cracked and shattered in condition. You will not suppose that I treat this matter with levity. I would strive to assert with sharpest distinctness, and with the most stamped emphasis of language, that I hold to the widest extent, and with the firmest grasp, the doctrine that in his best as well as in his worst estate, man is only an earthen vessel, and that in the work of saving souls, mere man is mere nothing. I know that sometimes, to burn this truth into us, and to make us remember for ever that, in salvation, "the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us," God is pleased to do the most magnificent things by the meanest instruments, and even by instruments that have no natural adaptation to the purpose. But what God may see fit to do in His department as the Sovereign Master, is no rule for what we should do in our department as His servants; and since, by using us, He is pleased to recognize the principle of work by means, it becomes us to furnish the best means in our power, never forgetting that the best and the worst are alike powerless without His Spirit. Churches should cheer on their truest men to be ministers, and ministers should cultivate their truest manhood. We know that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," but we do not understand this sentence to assert that not many are supernaturally called to be ministers, who are already considered as instruments

naturally qualified to be ministers. God's word never contradicts His deeds; and if you mark the ministers who were divinely called through the ages when God was giving the world His Bible, you see that they were all true men. "Look at the poor fishermen of Galilee!" I hear some one say. Do, and what do you see? Twelve invalids; twelve exquisites; twelve drones; twelve tailors' blocks; twelve mere readers, weak, white, and under-vitalized through indoor life and midnight meditation; twelve ascetics, who had fasted until they were skeletons, and the sun shone, and the wind blew through? Not you! These ministers were all naturally thorough men. They could run, and swim, and fling heavy ballast; "knew the wild joy of living, and leaping from rock up to rock;" bear rough wind and weather, and look life in the face. Though they *were* plain men, they were true; they had robust intellects, they had fresh power, they had weight; they could ring out clear and manly language. Look at the other ministers in the days of inspiration. Was Moses an ignoramus? was Gideon a coward? was Solomon a simpleton? was Daniel a tool? was David, even when but a rustic stripling, afraid of a lion or a bear? was Isaiah naturally a nothing, with nothing to say for himself? Even a savage in Africa, Dr. Livingstone tells us, was struck with the language of Isaiah, and said, "He *was* a fine man, he knew how to speak!"

The highest natural manliness, however, will not, abiding alone, be sufficient to make the man we mean. He must indeed be made *out* of the nature that has now been described, but he must be made out of it by grace. He *must* be born again. A child of the first Adam must have the quickening Spirit of the second Adam from heaven, before he is a man after the pattern hid in heaven. One who has not yet been renewed, and who does not yet believe, is not yet more than an unfulfilled prophecy of a

man. We want in Christ's workman, not only a sound mind in a sound body, but a new *heart*, making him a man from the centre, and a man all through; a man actuated by the Spirit of the Man Christ Jesus,—a man whose secret life is the life that loves Christ,—a man who without a falter can say YES to the question, "Lovest thou me?" the question that precedes the call to service; a man to whom even the worldling may point, and say to his child, "There, *there*, that is what I mean; there is a *man*, such a man as you must try to be." When God by nature and grace creates for us such a man, although, along with strong and fine humanity, he shows us even painfully that he knows from experience what the sins and sorrows, errors and weaknesses of humanity are; I am rather the more than the less inclined to exclaim, "He is born to be a minister!" and if in *him* I am to understand what is meant by "a man," I say that, for the work of the ministry, better have a man than an angel!

II. We find that a pastor should be a *work*man. In bringing out what appears to be the import of this expression, we shall see that, from first to last, there is in the Christian ministry a necessity for work.

There must be work to acquire the needful preparation. The work of the student must precede the work of the pastor. In all guilds, workmanship is understood to come after apprenticeship. I see no reason why the law of preparation should be repealed only in the case of the highest employment a man can have; and that, the greater the work, the smaller the need of training for it. No one can imagine, however, that I now refer to mere academic training. Many of the teachers to whom the church is most indebted, have been without this great advantage. I now mean any mode of training, the result of which, in the minister, is needful knowledge, and knowing

how to use that knowledge. No system of "learning made easy" can lead to this result; there is no such thing as instantaneous education; all true culture must come out of true toil. These principles have often been challenged. The same view of the gospel that tempts men to calumniate manhood, tempts them to decry scholarship, and to scorn all human processes of training. Of course, the poor Galilean trawlers are summoned into court again. "Were they not," we are asked, "the first ministers of Christ? yet were they not unlearned and ignorant men?" Persons who cite this sentence, as thus translated, should be told that it really only means "unprofessional and plebeian men,"—men, whose calm address and astonishing intelligence, the magistrates could only account for by the fact that they had "been with Jesus." So far from the case of the apostles being one that shakes our position, it irresistibly confirms it. Single out any one of them, and read the story of his novitiate. First, he was taught in the school of business, learnt to earn his living, to attend the markets, to read human nature, to know the ways of the world. Some of our younger ministerial friends, when they were first bent on becoming ministers, used to tell us, in various ways, their opinion that all time was lost that was still spent in the office or counting-house; yet they were as essentially in training for their life-work *then* as now. The apostolic minister, whose course we are now trying to trace, first passed through a similar stage. After that, he spent three years at college. There, Christ Himself was his tutor, and Christ's sublimest followers were his fellow-students. All this time he had, as a matter of course, an intimate knowledge of Hebrew rites and laws; the customs and phrases of the age, as well as the fauna and flora of Palestine—in a word, the knowledge that constitutes the learning of our greatest Biblicists. He knew the language in which "Moses

was read in the synagogue every Sabbath day," and the living language of Christ's discourses. In that language, faint shoots of meaning and delicate colours of thought that take us years to see, he saw in a moment. We would rather not hear any more of an apostle's defective training as an apology for indolence on the part of the student, or of parsimony on the part of those who are responsible for helping him to a sufficient education. Compared with that of the first ministers, what ministerial education within our power is worth mention? Let the thought of it stir each student to make the most of his short course of study in college, and to regard it as simply introductory to a course that is to last his lifetime. "Read hard, not for the praise of men, but for the glory of God," was the advice given to Henry Martyn when at Cambridge, and it is the fraternal advice given to you now. After all, solemnly bear in mind that we have been looking at the Christian ministry only from the human side, and speaking merely of instrumental fitness; of *man's* part, not of God's part; of what comes within the province of human duty, not of Divine prerogative. Never let us forget that no process of ours can by itself train you for your high vocation. "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." He who gave you a new heart must put that heart to school. He whose regenerating Spirit made you teachable, must be your teacher. "The Lord God must give you the tongue of the learned, that you may know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary." Without this, though a man may be as versed in Jewish lore as was Gamaliel, as pure a classic as any man who heard Paul preach at Athens, and though, to use Bunyan's racy, home-thrusting language, he may know how to write Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as well as Pontius Pilate did, he will no more than he was, be a true minister of Jesus Christ.

My next remark is, that a pastor must be a workman *to know the word well enough to be its interpreter.* His proper business is to be "a minister of the word." Reserving what I meant to say about the meaning and history of the word *word*, I proceed to say that a man will never be able to know the word, so as to explain it, without real work. I should like to say most lovingly and respectfully to all theological students—if indeed though God has given out of heaven a book glorious with many thousands of texts for the glorification of Christ, you preach as if inspiration had only written this one—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" if you are contented to intone for ever a few sentimentalisms, or to drum for ever with calm perseverance on a few superficial platitudes; if, as was said of a certain Frenchman, distinguished for his rhythmical rhetoric and for nothing more, you pass life "on the summit of syllables;" if, for the sake of a quiet life, you contrive to propitiate that good man, whoever he may be, with whom it is orthodoxy to think that a sermon is good only when it teaches him nothing, and whose highest praise of it is given in the formula, "Most excellent discourse—I have said the very same things myself, a thousand times;" or if, instead of preaching the "word of truth," you are in a hurry to utter your own doubts or dreams, or first, unsettled, transitional opinions about it, and so to gain from juvenile debaters the honour of being called "a man who is not afraid to think for himself,"—then your study of the word will not be an exhausting task. If, however, on the other hand, you search the Scriptures through and through as for "hidden treasure;" if you search the book of grace with no less reverence for fact and passion for truth than a true naturalist feels when he searches the book of nature; if you search that you may know for yourself what Christ is, and what He has actually

done, search that you may get at His real thoughts, and find out exactly what He means, so as to tell all this to others, —then, although the Bible will be the book of your supreme delight, it will be no light reading, with which to pass away the time in a "Castle of Indolence."

A minister must *rightly divide the word of truth;* and every one ought to see that this also can only be done by "a workman." The apostle, in thus describing the function of a pastor, seems to have in his mind the idea of a person who has the responsibility of providing for the wants of a family, and whose place it is to give to each member of it what is right for him to have. Old writers like to speak of a church under simple domestic imagery. Such imagery is scarcely true to modern fact. In the life of London, with its hurry, fever, and change, its rage for rapid movement and new sensation, the members of our churches are rather like passengers at a railway station, waiting for the next train, than members of a family, all settled down in "a home of ancient peace," and all delighting in its dear, tender, and holy associations. For a pastor to know them in every instance, by means of close personal intercourse, is out of the question. Even in the country it requires no small tact to time pastoral visits so as not to break in upon the meal-time of the poor, not to hinder the wife's household work, to find the husband free for talk, and to avoid all intrusion. Generally speaking, a pastor's knowledge of the people must mainly come by self-knowledge, by inference, and by love—love that quickens the instincts of observation—love that teaches him how to live in their lives—love that has labour in it—labour that has sorrow in it; for ever since the perfect Man walked the earth, every man of sympathies has been a man of sorrows. Laborious and sorrowful as the work may be, it must be done. Old and young, sick and healthy, employers and

employed, must be sufficiently known to have "a portion of meat in due season."

A minister must be a workman in order *to present the word of truth in the best way.* To bring together the results of laborious investigation, to select and apply them so that no one may have reason to say, "This preaching has nothing to do with me;" to cultivate that method in presentation, which, says Hooker, is realized when "all that goes before prepares the way for all that follows, and all that follows confirms all that went before;" to study habitually the precise power and value of words, so that words may always be used with careful truth, and with a spirit of self-denial that will be eager to clear away from each sentence all mere verbiage, however sparkling and decorative; to strive after the mastery of natural, honest, and translucent language, through which light will strike on the very "angles of thought;" to be so disciplined in these habits of accuracy, that they will not be likely to fail you greatly, even in the rush of the most free and impassioned speech,—to do all this is to be a *workman,* and all this a pastor must aim to do. Some Christians may fancy that such advice attaches a false importance to mere man's work, and is likely to foster his vanity. *Vanity!* Such Christians, if masters, think it not vanity, but common honesty, that makes their own workman try to turn out good work; and is another style of honesty, or a lower standard of conscience, required on the part of workmen who are employed by the Master in heaven? Vanity! I would fling the thing off into the fire, as Paul did the viper. Vanity! I feel hurt at the thought. My heart tells me that if I do anything for Christ, I am bound to do my best, and to do it not merely from the spur of duty, but from the living inspiration of love. Then, having *done* my best in preparing for a public service, and my very best is poor

indeed, even when after all my endeavours to do my best, I have *done nothing*—"I will trust, and not be afraid." At the stroke of the hour, with blank mind, out of the fit of anxious care, or blinding pain, or deadly faintness, I *will go*, just blank as I am, to speak all the words of this life, knowing that, as I stand at my post, One will stand by me who has said, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say . . . and thou shalt take this rod in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs."

Allow me further to say that any workman who deserves the name will, in doing all that he professes to do, *give his own real, sincere, and honest work.* This rule forbids the slavish imitation of any other man's style of work. Mere imitators of other men, most naturally copy what is easiest to copy, and what is easiest is sure to be some striking mannerism or defect. For instance, in Robert Hall's time, the students of Bristol tried not only to roll his raptures and to catch his fires, but to imitate the pain in his back; at least, Mr. Hall once told me that they used to imitate the involuntary movement of the poor hand, that was caused by that pain. It is one thing to mimic the limp of Vulcan, another to fashion the shield of Achilles. This rule also forbids, in the department of pastoral teaching, the unacknowledged use of any other man's work. Of course, kindred minds will be likely to think, feel, and speak alike on kindred themes; and readers of many books will, to the delight of petty critics, sometimes give the thoughts of other men, when they suppose that they are only giving their own. All I now say is, that no honourable workman will, simply to gain his own advantage, or to save his own trouble, pass off as his own work the stolen work of another man; to do so would at least be as great a sin in a minister's study as in a carpenter's shop. Such a habit will be as fatal to his proficiency as to his credit. He will

never become a true workman in this way. No more than a bird can learn to fly with another bird's wings, can a man learn to think with another man's thoughts, or to work by appropriating another man's workmanship. This rule further forbids the use of mechanical contrivances to save labour. I have been told that books have been published with a view to this, such as Books of Quotations for the use of preachers. Such books may deserve all the praise due to laborious and skilful compilation; they may occasionally interest all thoughtful readers; they may even be helps to devoted workers in city mission rooms and village preaching stations; they may be of service to many a self-denying evangelist, whose time is taken up in the duties of his worldly calling, and who therefore has no time for study; they may furnish suggestions to preachers with whom preaching is rather the παρεργον than the εργον of life, the *bye* business rather than the business; but, with the most respectful deference to any elders who may differ from me, I take leave to say most earnestly, that books after this order are not fit for students such as we are. Addison, in one of the Spectators, tells us of a certain ingenious Dutchman who invented a mill for grinding verses; but however successful *that* speculation might have been, I am sure that *our* work can never be done by machinery; machine-made sermons will not wear, and I warn all young ministers within my radius against the use of any apparatus for the manufacture of pulpit work out of bits of books. Even illustrations will be worth little, unless you have earned the right to use them by your own labour. They will not fit, they will not be apt, they will not be characteristic of the speaker. If indeed by artificial means you save labour just now, I can tell you that after you have preached four or five thousand sermons, you will find that you have no joy or power in preaching, unless your

preaching has always been the work of your own mental intensities, and the outforce of your own kindling life. I say to students,—gentlemen, not only because it is part of my calling and yours to protest against all shams and unrealities, but because I want you to be workmen needing not to be ashamed, I entreat you to think and read for yourselves. Ponder the words of John Locke, "He who has raised himself above the *almsbasket*, and not *content to live lazily on scraps of borrowed opinion*, sets his own thoughts to work to find and follow truth, will, whatever he lights on, not miss the hunter's satisfaction; but every moment will reward him with some delight." Have nothing to do with books that supersede the necessity of work, encourage a false parade of attainments, and so emasculate the ministry.

Admitting that a pastor ought to give to what he devotes himself his own real, sincere, and honest work, I am sure you will agree with me that his vocation has the distinction of being a laborious one. If any one should be called a son of toil, *he* should be. Perhaps the common impression is that a minister's life is one of ease. The word "workman" suggests to most persons the idea of a man grim with coal dust, or splashed with lime and red paint, or at least of one whose days are spent in some round of exhausting physical activity. They can understand that it is work to rub down a horse, or clip a hedge, or plane a plank, or pitch a ton of hay, or make a pair of shoes, but they know nothing about the work that is done with heart and soul, mind and strength. They estimate a pastor's spiritual work according to the same material standard. The prophet tells us that a pastor after God's own heart is one who "feeds the people with knowledge and understanding;" but the pastor after *man's* own heart is often one whose work is measured by the number of stairs that he climbs, or of hands that he shakes, or of syllables that he articulates. Let him be active in

body, and then, however *in*active in mind, he is looked upon as a devoted workman. I hope there is not a young minister here who thinks lightly of true pastoral visitation; but much that goes under that name is but a mere degradation of manliness, a waste of strength, a lounge of busy idleness through the world of small facts and petty impulses in which gossips live, and so far from being a part of pastoral work, is one of its most serious hindrances. Our most important and exhaustive labour is in the department of spiritual preparation, not of bodily exercise; labour which, because it is unseen by the public, is unreckoned. It is not a hard thing for a man to shut himself up in what he calls his study, and then think that he is thinking; but really, thoroughly, and consecutively to think, is the hardest of hard work. "There is something," says the wise Richard Cecil, "that supports itself in outward bustle and show. At one period, I preached and read five times on a Sunday, and rode sixteen miles. But what did it cost me? Nothing! Yet most men would have looked on me, as I was rattling from village to village, with all the dogs barking at my heels, and would have called me a hero; whereas, if they were to look at me now, they would call me a lazy lounging fellow. 'He makes a sermon on the Saturday—he gets into his study—he walks from end to end—he scribbles on a scrap of paper—he throws it away, and scribbles on another—he takes snuff—he sits down—scribbles again—walks about.' The man cannot see that here is an exhaustion of spirit which at night will leave me worn to the extremity of endurance; cannot see the numberless efforts of mind which are crossed and stifled, and recoil on the spirits, like the fruitless efforts of a traveller to get firm footing among the ashes on the steep sides of Mount Etna."

Gentlemen, there is *no* work like that of the hidden life, and that life has nothing harder to do than to prepare for

the highest teaching. There is agony in the chaos that precedes creation.

Forgive me if I level the few remaining words I have to say, straight at the students. Gentlemen, I say,—it is plain that, in order to all this, *you must give yourselves to prayer, as much as to work.* I can imagine one of you saying to himself, "I, even I, am about to undertake a pastoral charge; I am indeed! Here am I, just turned twenty-two, beginning to preach three times a week in the same place, perhaps for many years, to experienced saints whose white hairs are a crown of glory, and to be the spiritual adviser of men and women who had already lived a long, mysterious, many-chaptered life when I was yet only in the cradle. I shall have to watch for souls as one who must give an account; for souls, each one of whom has in it such infinite possibilities, and so grand a life, that perhaps a time will come, when, compared with its history, the present history of this ancient planet will only be like a simple village tale. I have to strive with all my might to set such souls in the right road for eternity. While I call upon sinners to believe, my constant endeavour must be to 'help greatly such as have believed through grace.' Not one member of the flock must be unprovided for, however obscure, or old, or young; for Christ has not only said, 'Feed my sheep,' but 'Feed my lambs.' I have to glory in the cross, and to show that the Crucified One is called Jesus, not only because He came to save His people from their penalties, but from their *sins; their* sins, whatever they may be—white lies, small dishonesties, unlovely tempers, and all their secret *faults*, as well as those scarlet sins which glare before the public, and challenge the stroke of social justice."

"Who then is sufficient for these things?" "Our sufficiency is of God." All the real power you have is divine, all the real success is from the direct working of that Holy

Spirit, whose influence is the answer to prayer. There was deep truth in an inscription which the old French surgeons had sculptured over their college gateway, "I dressed his wound, and God healed him." The principle recognized in this motto should never be out of a minister's mind, stirring him up to pray. Brethren, let us do nothing without prayer. Pray evermore, that He who is the Resurrection and the Life may breathe upon the dry bones, that they may live. Let us pray that among the souls you labour for, you may constantly see evidence of the Saviour's presence, such as was once described in the announcement, "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Day by day, with page after page of names before you, one by one, pray for *individuals.* Pray that the work of the Lord may not be hindered by weak brethren who stop the way with unblessed and unsanctified crotchets. Pray for calm strength when it is your duty to be angry, and it often will be, that you may not exhibit the sorrowful spectacle of weakness in a fury,—shattered, but shattering nothing. Pray that you may maintain the perpetual life and freshness of your spirituality; that God's word may never, like "daily handled fire," sear and harden the soul that holds it forth; that your eye may never be dimmed, nor your voice made falsetto by the *scarlet letter* of some hidden sin; that you may never have to speak "by virtue of *yesterday's* faith, hoping it will come back to-morrow." Pray that you may ever apply to yourself what you preach to others—like George Whitefield, who said that he was never ready to preach a sermon to the people until he had preached it to George Whitefield. Pray that you may pray. Even prayer itself will often be a work, and sometimes an agony. There will be times when, though you utter words of

supplication, and keep up habits of devotional retirement, you will feel as if you were speaking into vacancy, and will find that it is a hard thing to wrestle with the Unseen. The Satan you fled from in the world, will meet you in the holy of holies; fiery darts will strike, and sin explode even there.

III. A true minister *will never be ashamed.* My dear brethren, no man in this world yet knows what it is to be thoroughly ashamed of himself. The tremendous force of the word "shame" can only be felt by spirits "on the other side of death;" it is one of the secrets of hell. One lightning glance of the soul into its own depths, Christ in that moment not being realized, would startle up the consternation that rang in the sharp cry of old, "O my God, my trust is in Thee; let me not be ashamed, let me never be put to confusion!" The wicked and slothful workman; the workman who, instead of always working "in the great Taskmaster's eye," works to catch the admiring glance of the world, works only in his own strength, and spends that strength only on things that man can see, while he slurs over all the rest; the workman who steals; the workman whose work is not true, and will not wear; the workman who for the sake of his own ease, or of his own petty popularity with the unreading, unthinking crowd, displays as his own the hard work of another workman; the man who has presumed to undertake a work which he has neither power to perform, nor courage to forsake—that man, if not ashamed, ought to be; and when the fierce light of the great white throne beats upon his spirit, and he is found out, he *must* be. But the workman who has been depicted in this address, *never can* be in this world, or in any other. It is not denied that you will sometimes *feel ashamed.* It is only to be asserted that in no essential thing, and in no final sense, you will have *need* to be ashamed.

When, for instance, you hear it mischievously said that preaching Christ is certain to fill a thinly attended chapel, and that a thinly attended chapel is a certain proof that Christ is not preached there, *that* statement, if believed, may make you feel ashamed, because you perhaps lack this proof, though you lack no other, that *you* preach Christ. Small present and visible signs of success may make you *feel* ashamed; the fear that you may die with but little finished work to be seen by man may make you *feel* ashamed; but if only on grounds like these you feel shame, you will not have *need* to feel it.

When I was about seventeen years old, pardon the self-reference, I one day stood in a certain hushed chamber, lifted a white cloth, and looked on the face of John Foster, grand in the solemn unfathomable calm of death. Then I stepped into the study, where everything was just where he had left it. There was the old frayed gown, flung on the old rickety cane-chair, just as he had left it. There were the great horn-framed spectacles, just where he had put them down for the last time. There was Bohn's wonderful catalogue that he had been lately speaking about. There, on the carpetless floor, was a box labelled "From Strong's, College Green," and perhaps containing rare prints, to be opened some day. All around were books, and many of them rare copies of rare editions, but all huddled on the shelves as if by accident—to be set right some day. Everything seemed to speak typically about a workman called away from his unfinished work. The great workman was gone, where was his work? Surely there had been many conversions to crown such a ministry, there had been vast congregations who had crowded to rejoice in such a light! Where were they? They never had existence. The work done was too deep for statistics, too sublime for show, too vast to be finished in an earthly

lifetime. It went on in the noble inspirations it lent to many ministers in the last generation, some of it is going on in this company now, some of it will go on for ever. That mighty spirit, whose human name was John Foster, has no need to be ashamed. Only be sure that you trust Christ, love Christ, live Christ, preach Christ, care supremely about winning souls for Christ, then leave results to Christ—you will all have success, though the success may be seen under different forms, at different dates, to the advantage of different orders of minds, and in different worlds. You never will be, you never can be, ashamed on account of the futility of your labours and the folly of your prayers. Then, brothers, of what *will* you, of what *can* you, be ashamed? Ashamed of the word you have to divide, ashamed of salvation, ashamed of grace, ashamed of glory, ashamed of the robe in which you will stand in the day of account, ashamed of Jesus, ashamed of speaking for Him, ashamed of suffering for Him, ashamed of living for Him, ashamed of dying for Him? Let the world do its worst against you for Jesus' sake, and what shall be the sentiment but this?

> "Now, Faithful, play the man, speak for thy God;
> Fear not the wicked's malice nor his rod:
> Speak boldly, man; the truth is on thy side;
> *Die for it*, and to Christ in triumph ride!"

Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Printers, London and Aylesbury.